

Engraved by E. Mackenzie.

WILLIAM JOHNSON WILLIAMS.

LETTERS

OF

THE REV. JOHN FLETCHER,

VICAR OF MADELEY.

ORIGINALLY EDITED

BY REV. MELVILL HORNE,

CURATE OF MADELEY.

New-York :

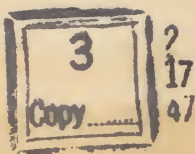
PUBLISHED BY LANE & SCOTT,

200 Mulberry-street.

JOSEPH LONGKING, PRINTER.

1849.

BX9495
F6A4



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PREFACE.

THE letters contained in this volume form part of a work edited by Rev. Melvill Horne, and entitled "The Posthumous Works of the Rev. John Fletcher." He states in his Preface, that he was indebted to Mrs. Fletcher for the "Letters on the Manifestation of Christ," which were found in the handwriting of the author. He proceeds:—"When they were written, or to *whom* they were addressed, I cannot learn : but, from the beginning of the first letter, the decayed state of the manuscript, and the extreme smallness of the character, (which could scarcely have been legible to the Author in his latter years,) I judge them to have been the first essay of a genius afterward so much admired."

The "Pastoral and Familiar Letters" cover a period extending from the time of Mr.

Fletcher's conversion to within a few days of his decease. They form an admirable picture of the holy life and ardent devotion of this self-denying associate of John Wesley's labour; of whom even Mr. Southey records, that "no age or country has ever produced a man of more fervent piety or more perfect charity; no church has ever possessed a more apostolic minister." As these sweet and spiritual Letters have been long out of print in any portable form, the publishers are doing a welcome service to the religious public in issuing the present neat and convenient edition.

J. M'CLINTOCK.

March 20, 1849.

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SIX LETTERS

ON

THE SPIRITUAL MANIFESTATION

OF

THE SON OF GOD.

I am not mad, most noble Festus ; but speak the words of truth and soberness.—ACTS xxvi, 25.

Wisdom is justified of her children.—MATT. xi, 19.

LETTERS ON THE SPIRITUAL MANIFESTA- TION OF THE SON OF GOD.

LETTER I.

SIR,—When I had the pleasure of seeing you last, you seemed surprised to hear me say that the Son of God, for purposes worthy of his wisdom, manifests himself, sooner or later, to all his sincere followers, in a spiritual manner which the world knows not of. The assertion appeared to you unscriptural, enthusiastical, and dangerous. What I then advanced to prove that it was Scriptural, rational, and of the greatest importance, made you desire I would write to you on the mysterious subject. I declined it, as being unequal to the task; but having since considered that a mistake here may endanger your soul and mine, I sit down to comply with your request: and the end I propose by it is, either to give you a fair opportunity of pointing out my error, if I am wrong; or to engage you, if I am right, to seek what I esteem the most valuable of all blessings—revelations of Christ to your own soul, productive of the experimental knowledge of him, and the present enjoyment of his salvation.

As an architect cannot build a palace unless he be allowed a proper spot to erect it upon, so I shall not be able to establish the doctrine I maintain unless you allow me the existence of the proper senses to which our Lord manifests himself. The manifestation I contend for being of a spiritual nature, must be made to spiritual senses; and that such

senses exist, and are opened in, and exercised by, regenerate souls, is what I design to prove in this letter, by the joint testimony of Scripture, our church, and reason.

I. The Scriptures inform us that Adam lost the experimental knowledge of God by the fall. His foolish attempt to hide himself from his Creator, whose eyes are in every place, evidences the total blindness of his understanding. The same veil of unbelief which hid God from his mind, was drawn over his heart and all his spiritual senses. He died the death, the moral, spiritual death, in consequence of which the corruptible body sinks into the grave, and the unregenerate soul into hell.

In this deplorable state Adam begat his children. We, like him, are not only void of the life of God, but alienated from it through the ignorance that is in us. Hence it is, that though we are possessed of such an animal and rational life, as he retained after the commission of his sin, yet we are, by nature, utter strangers to the holiness and bliss he enjoyed in a state of innocence. Though we have, in common with beasts, bodily organs of sight, hearing, tasting, smelling, and feeling, adapted to outward objects; though we enjoy, in common with devils, the faculty of reasoning upon natural truths and mathematical propositions; yet we do not understand supernatural and divine things. Notwithstanding all our speculations about them, we can neither see nor taste them truly, unless we are "risen with Christ and taught of God." We may, indeed, speak and write about them, as the blind may speak of colours, and the deaf dispute of sounds, but it is all guesswork, hearsay, and mere conjecture. The things of the Spirit of God cannot be discovered but by spiritual, internal senses, which are, with regard to the spiritual world, what our bodily external senses are with regard to the material world. They are the only medium by which an intercourse between Christ and our souls can be opened and maintained.

The exercise of these senses is peculiar to those who are born of God. They belong to what the apostles call "the new man, the inward man, the new creature, the hidden man of the heart." In believers, this hidden man is awakened and raised from the dead by the power of Christ's resurrection. Christ is his life, the Spirit of God is his spirit, prayer or praise his breath, holiness his health, and love his element. We read of his hunger and thirst, food and drink, garment and habitation, armour and conflicts, pain and pleasure, fainting and reviving, growing, walking, and working. All this supposes senses, and the more these senses are quickened by God, and exercised by the new-born soul, the clearer and stronger is his perception of divine things.

On the other hand, in unbelievers, the inward man is deaf, blind, naked, asleep, past feeling; yea, dead in trespasses and sins; and of course as incapable of perceiving spiritual things, as a person in a deep sleep, or a dead man, of discovering outward objects. St. Paul's language to him is, "Awake, thou that sleepest, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." He calls him a natural man, one who hath no higher life than his parents conveyed to him by natural generation—one who follows the dictates of his own sensual soul, and is neither born of God, nor led by the Spirit of God. "The natural man," says the apostle, "receiveth not the things of the Spirit; for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned." He has no sense properly exercised for this kind of discernment; "his eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into his heart, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him."

The reverse of the natural man is the spiritual, so called, because God hath revealed spiritual things to him by his Spirit, who is now in him a principle of spiritual and eternal life. "The spiritual man," says the apostle, "judgeth [that is, discerneth] all things, yet he himself is discerned of no one."

The high state he is in can no more be discerned by the natural man, than the condition of the natural man can be discerned by a brute. 1 Cor. ii, 10-15.

St. Paul not only describes the spiritual man, but speaks particularly of his internal, moral senses. Christians, says he, of full age, by reason of use have their senses exercised to discern good and evil. Heb. v, 14. He prays that the love of the Philippians "may abound more and more in knowledge, and *εν παση αισθησει*, in all sense or feeling." Phil. i, 9. The Scriptures constantly mention or allude to one or other of these spiritual senses. Give me leave to produce some instances.

1. To begin with the sight. St. Paul prays that, the eyes of his converts being enlightened, they might know what is the hope of their calling. He reminds them that Christ had been evidently set forth crucified before their eyes. He assures them that the god of this world hath blinded the eyes of them that believe not the gospel; and declares that his commission was to open the eyes of the Gentiles, and turn them from darkness to light. Abraham saw Christ's day, and was glad. Moses persevered, as seeing Him who is invisible. David prayed, "Open my eyes that I may see wonders out of thy law." Our Lord complains that the heart of unbelievers is waxed gross, that their ears are dull of hearing, and that "they have closed their eyes; lest they should see with their eyes, understand with their hearts, and be converted." He counsels the Laodiceans to anoint their eyes with eye-salve, that they might see. He declares that the world cannot receive the Spirit of truth, because it sees him not; that the things which belong to the peace of obstinate unbelievers are, at last, judicially hid from their eyes; and that the pure in heart shall see God. St. John testifies that he who doeth evil hath not seen God; and that darkness hath blinded the eyes of him that loves not his brother. The

Holy Ghost informs us that believers look at the things which are not seen, and behold the glory of God shining in the face of Jesus Christ. These are the eyes with which believers see the salvation of God. They are so distinct from those of the body, that when our Lord opened them in St. Paul's soul, he suffered scales to grow over his bodily eyes. And, no doubt, when Christ gave outward sight to the blind, it was chiefly to convince the world that it is he who can say to blind sinners, "Receive your sight; see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living; look unto me, and be saved."

2. If you do not admit of a spiritual hearing, what can you make of our Lord's repeated caution, "He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear?" And what can be the meaning of the following scriptures:—"Hear, O foolish people, who have ears, and hear not. Ye uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye cannot hear my words; ye are of your father the devil." "He that is of God, heareth God's words; ye, therefore, hear them not, because ye are not of God?" Can it be supposed that our Lord spake of outward hearing, when he said, "The hour cometh, and now is, that the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and live." "My sheep hear my voice." "He that hath heard and learned of the Father, cometh unto me?" Do not all sinners stand spiritually in need of Christ's powerful Ephphatha, "Be thou opened?" Is that man truly converted, who cannot witness with Isaiah, "The Lord hath wakened my ear to hear as the learned?" and with the Psalmist, "Mine ears hast thou opened?" Had not the believers at Ephesus heard Christ, and been taught of him? When St. Paul was caught up into the third heaven, did he not hear words unspeakable? And, far from thinking spiritual hearing absurd or impossible, did he not question whether he was not then out of the body? And does not St. John positively declare that he was "in

the Spirit," when he heard Jesus say, "I am the first and the last?"

3. How void of meaning are the following passages, if they do not allude to that sense which is calculated for the reception of what the barrenness of human language compels me to call "spiritual perfumes!"—"The smell of thy ointments is better than all spices." "The smell of thy garments is like the smell of Lebanon." "All thy garments smell of myrrh, aloes, and cassia; and because of the savour of thy good ointments, thy name is as ointment poured forth."

4. If believers have not a spiritual faculty of tasting divine things, what delusion must they be under, when they say Christ's fruit is sweet to their taste, and cry out, "How sweet are thy words to my taste! they are sweeter than honey to my mouth!" But how justly can they speak thus if they have tasted the heavenly gift, and the good word of God, and, as new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of it! Surely, if they eat the flesh of the Son of God, drink his blood, and taste that the Lord is gracious, they have a right to testify that his love is better than wine; and to invite those that hunger and thirst after righteousness to taste that the Lord is good, that they also may be satisfied with his goodness and mercy, as with marrow and fatness.

5. If we are not to be perfect Stoics in religion; if we should have one degree more of devotion than the marble statues which adorn our churches; we should have, I think, some feeling of our unworthiness, some sense of God's majesty. Christ's tender heart was pierced to atone for, and to remove, the hardness of ours. God promises to take from us the heart of stone, and to give us a heart of flesh—a broken and contrite heart, the sacrifice of which he will not despise. Good King Josiah was praised because his heart was tender. The conversion of the three

thousand on the Day of Pentecost began by their being *pricked* in their heart. We are directed to *feel* after God, if haply we may find him. Our Lord himself is not ashamed to be "*touched*," in heaven, "with a *feeling* of our infirmities." And St. Paul intimates, that the highest degree of obduracy and apostacy is to be *past feeling*, and to have our conscience *seared* as with a hot iron.

I hope, sir, you will not attempt to set aside so many plain passages, by saying they are unfit to support a doctrine, as containing empty metaphors, which amount just to nothing. This would be pouring the greatest contempt on the perspicuity of the oracles of God, the integrity of the sacred writers, and the wisdom of the Holy Ghost who inspired them. As certainly as there is a spiritual life, there are senses calculated for the display and enjoyment of it; and these senses exist no more in metaphor than the life that exerts itself by them. Our Lord settled the point when he declared to Nicodemus, that no man can see the kingdom of God—the kingdom of grace here and of glory hereafter—except he be first born of God, born of the Spirit; just as no child can see this world, except he be first born of a woman, born of the flesh. Hence it appears that a regenerate soul hath its spiritual senses opened, and made capable of discerning what belongs to the spiritual world; as a new-born infant hath his natural senses unlocked, and begins to see, hear, and taste, what belongs to the material world into which he enters.

II. These declarations of the Lord, his prophets, and apostles, need no confirmation. Nevertheless, to show you, sir, that I do not mistake their meaning, I shall add the testimony of our own excellent church. As she strictly agrees with the Scripture, she makes also frequent mention of spiritual sensations; and you know, sir, that sensations necessarily suppose senses. She prays that God would "give us a due sense of his inestimable love

in the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ.” —*Thanksgiving*. She begs that he would “make us know and feel there is no other name than that of Jesus whereby we must be saved.” —*Office for the Sick*. She affirms that true penitents feel “the burden of their sins intolerable,” (*Communion*;) that godly persons “feel in themselves the workings of Christ’s Spirit,” (*Seventeenth Article*;) that “the Lord speaks presently to us in the Scriptures, to the great and endless comfort of all that have any *feeling* of God in them at all;” that “godly men felt inwardly the Holy Ghost inflaming their hearts with the fear and love of God, and that they are miserable wretches who have no feeling of God within them at all!” (*Hom. on Certain Places of Scripture*;) and that “if we feel the heavy burden of our sins pressing our souls, and tormenting us with the fear of death, hell, and damnation, we must steadfastly behold Christ crucified with the eyes of our heart.” —*Second Hom. on the Passions*.

Our church farther declares that “true faith is not in the mouth and outward profession only, but liveth and stirreth inwardly in the heart;” and that “if we feel and perceive such a faith in us, we must rejoice,” (*Hom. on Faith, first and third part*;) that “correction, though painful, bringeth with it a taste of God’s goodness,” (*Hom. on the Fear of Death, second part*;) that “if after our contrition we feel our consciences at peace with God, through the remission of our sin, it is God who worketh that great miracle in us;” and she prays, that “as this knowledge and feeling is not in ourselves, and as by ourselves it is not possible to come by it, the Lord would give us grace to know these things, and feel them in our hearts.” —*Hom. for Rogation Week, third part*. She begs that “God would assist us with his Holy Spirit, that we may hearken to the voice of the good Shepherd,” (*Hom. on Repentance, second part*;) she sets us upon asking continually that the Lord would “lighten our

darkness," and deliver us from the two heaviest plagues of Pharaoh,—“blindness and hardness of heart.”—*Evening Prayer and Litany*. And she affirms that “if we will be profitable hearers of the Scriptures, we must keep under our carnal senses, taken by the outward words, search the inward meaning, and give place to the Holy Ghost,” whose peculiar office it is to open our spiritual senses, as he opened Lydia’s heart.—*Hom. on Certain Places of Scripture*.

If I did not think the testimony of our blessed reformers, founded upon that of the sacred writers, of sufficient weight to turn the scale of your sentiments, I could throw in the declarations of many ancient and modern divines. To instance in two or three only:—St. Cyril, in the thirteenth book of his *Treasure*, affirms, that “men know Jesus is the Lord by the Holy Ghost, no otherwise than they who taste honey know it is sweet, even by its proper quality.” Dr. Smith, of Queen’s College, Cambridge, in his *Select Discourses*, observes, after Plotinus, that “God is best discerned *νοερα τη αφη*, by an ‘intellectual touch’ of him.” “We must,” says he, “‘see with our eyes,’ to use St. John’s words, we must ‘hear with our ears, and our hands must handle the word of life,’ *εστι γαρ ψυχης αισθεις τις*, for the soul hath its sense as well as the body.” And Bishop Hopkins, in his *Treatise on the New Birth*, accounts for the Papists denying the knowledge of salvation, by saying, “It is no wonder that they who will not trust their natural senses in the doctrine of transubstantiation should not trust their spiritual ones in the doctrine of assurance.”

III. But instead of proving the point by multiplying quotations, let me entreat you, sir, to weigh the following observations in the balance of reason.

1. Do not all grant there is such a thing as moral sense in the world; and that to be utterly void of it, is to be altogether unfit for social life? If you had given a

friend the greatest proofs of your love, would not he be inexcusable if he felt no gratitude, and had absolutely no sense of your kindness? Now, if moral sense and feeling are universally allowed between man and man in civil life, why should it appear incredible, or irrational, that there should be such a thing between God and man in the divine life?

* * * * *

4. To conclude. If material objects cannot be perceived by man in his present state but through the medium of one or other of his bodily senses; by a parity of reason, spiritual objects cannot be discovered but through one or other of the senses which belong to the inward man. God being a Spirit, cannot be worshipped in truth, unless he be known in spirit. You may as soon imagine how a blind man, by reasoning on what he feels or tastes, can get true ideas of light and colours, as how one who has no spiritual senses opened, can, by all his reasoning and guessing, attain an experimental knowledge of the invisible God.

Thus, from the joint testimony of Scripture, of our church, and of reason, it appears that spiritual senses are a blessed reality. I have dwelt so long on the proof of their existence for two reasons:—

First. They are of infinite use in religion. Saving faith cannot subsist and act without them. If St. Paul's definition of that grace be just; if it be "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen;" it must be a principle of spiritual life more or less attended with the exercise of these senses according to the poetic and evangelical lines of Dr. Young:—

"My heart awake

Feels the great truths: to feel is to be fired,
And to believe, Lorenzo, is to feel."

Till professors see the necessity of believing in this manner, they rest in a refined form of godliness. To the

confidence of the Antinomians, they may, indeed, join the high profession of the foolish virgins. They may even crown their partial assent to the truths of the gospel with the zeal of Pharisees and the regularity of moralists; but still they stop short of the new creation, the new birth, the life of God in the soul of man. Nay, more, they stumble at some of the most important truths of Christianity, and think the discoveries that sound believers have of Christ and the spiritual world are enthusiastical delusions, or, at least, extraordinary favours, which they can very well do without. Thus, even while they allow the power of godliness in others, they rest satisfied without experiencing it in themselves.

Secondly. What I shall write will depend very much on the existence of spiritual senses; and if this letter convince you that they are opened in every new-born soul, you will more easily believe Christ can and does manifest himself by that proper medium; and my letters on Divine Manifestations will meet with a less prejudiced reader.

That Emmanuel, the light of the world, may direct me to write with soberness and truth, and you to read with attention and candour, is the sincere prayer of, sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER. II.

SIR,—Having proved in my first letter the existence of the spiritual senses, to which the Lord manifests himself, I shall now enter upon that subject, by letting you know, as far as my pen can do it,—

I. What is the nature of that manifestation which makes the believer more than conqueror over sin and death.

1. Mistake me not, sir, for the pleasure of calling me “enthusiast.” I do not insist, as you may imagine, upon a

manifestation of the voice, body, or blood of our Lord, to our external senses. Pilate heard Christ's voice, the Jews saw his body, the soldiers handled it, and some of them were literally sprinkled with his blood ; but this answered no spiritual end : they knew not God manifest in the flesh.

2. Nor do I understand such a knowledge of our Redeemer's doctrine, offices, promises, and performances, as the natural man can attain by the force of his understanding and memory. All carnal professors, all foolish virgins, by conversing with true Christians, hearing gospel sermons, and reading evangelical books, attain to the historical and doctrinal knowledge of Jesus Christ. Their understandings are informed ; but, alas ! their hearts remain unchanged. Acquainted with the letter, they continue ignorant of the Spirit. Boasting, perhaps, of the greatness of Christ's salvation, they remain altogether unsaved ; and full of talk about what he hath done for them, they know nothing of " Christ in them, the hope of glory."

3. Much less do I mean such a representation of our Lord's person and sufferings as the natural man can form to himself by the force of a warm imagination. Many, by seeing a striking picture of Jesus bleeding on the cross, or hearing a pathetic discourse on his agony in the garden, are deeply affected and melted into tears. They raise in themselves a lively idea of a great and good man unjustly tortured to death : their soft passions are wrought upon, and pity fills their heaving breasts. But, alas ! they remain strangers to the revelation of the Son of God by the Holy Ghost. The murder of Julius Cæsar, pathetically described, would have the same effect upon them as the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. A deep play would touch them as easily as a deep sermon, and much to the same purpose ; for in either case their impressions and their tears are generally wiped away together.

4. Nor yet do I understand good desires, meltings of

heart, victories over particular corruptions, a confidence that the Lord can and will save us, power to stay ourselves on some promises, gleams of joy, rays of comfort, enlivening hopes, touches of love ; no, not even foretastes of Christian liberty, and of the good word of God. These are rather the delightful drawings of the Father, than the powerful revelation of the Son. These (like the star that led the wise men for a time, then disappeared, and appeared again) are helps and encouragements to come to Christ, and not a divine union with him, by the revelation of himself.

I can more easily tell you, sir, what this revelation is not, than what it is. The tongues of men and angels want proper words to express the sweetness and glory with which the Son of God visits the souls that cannot rest without him. This blessing is not to be described, but enjoyed. It is to be "written, not with ink, but with the Spirit of the living God ; not on" paper or "tables of stone, but in the fleshly tables of the heart." May the Lord himself explain the mystery, by giving you to eat of the hidden manna, and bestowing upon you the new name, which no man knows save he that receives it ! In the mean time take a view of the following rough draft of this mercy ; and, if it be agreeable to the letter of the word, pray that it may be engraved on your heart by the power of the Spirit.

The revelation of Christ, by which a carnal professor becomes a holy and happy possessor of the faith, is a supernatural, spiritual, experimental manifestation of the Spirit, power, and love, and sometimes of the person of God manifest in the flesh, whereby he is known and enjoyed in a manner altogether new : as new as the knowledge that a man, who never tasted anything but bread and water, would have of honey and wine, suppose, being dissatisfied with the best descriptions of those rich productions of nature, he actually tasted them for himself.

This manifestation is, sooner or later, in a higher or lower

degree, vouchsafed to every sincere seeker, through the medium of one or more of the spiritual senses opened in his soul, in a gradual or instantaneous manner, as it pleases God. No sooner is the veil of unbelief which covers the heart, rent, through the agency of the Spirit, and the efforts of the soul struggling into a living belief of the word; no sooner, I say, is the door of faith opened, than Christ, who stood at the door and knocked, comes in, and discovers himself full of grace and truth. Then the tabernacle of God is with man. His kingdom comes with power. Righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, spread through the new-born soul; eternal life begins; heaven is open on earth; the conscious heir of glory cries, "Abba, Father;" and from blessed experience can witness that he is come to "Mount Sion, and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels; to the general assembly and church of the first born which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel."

If this manifestation be duly improved, the effects of it are admirable. The believer's heart, now set at liberty from the guilt and dominion of sin, and drawn by the love of Jesus, pants after greater conformity to his holy will, and mounts up to him in prayer and praise. His life is a course of cheerful, evangelical obedience; and his most common actions become good works, done to the glory of God. If he walk up to his privileges, outward objects entangle him no more. Having found the great I AM, the eternal substance, he looks upon all created things as shadows. Man, the most excellent of all, appears to him "altogether lighter than vanity." "Yea, doubtless, he counts all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of

Christ Jesus his Lord ; esteeming them but dung, that he may win Christ, and, to the last, be found in him, not having his own righteousness, but that which is through the faith of Christ :” that by new discoveries of himself he may know him and the power of his resurrection every day more clearly. In the mean time he casts his sins and miseries upon Jesus, and Jesus bestows his righteousness and happiness upon him. He puts on Christ, and becomes a partaker of the divine nature. Thus they are mutually interested in each other ; and, to use St. Paul’s endearing expressions, they are espoused and married. Joined by the double band of redeeming love and saving faith, they are one spirit, as Adam and Eve by matrimony were one flesh. “This is a great mystery,” says the apostle ; but, thanks be to God ! it is made manifest to his saints. Eph. v, 32.

II. If you ask, “Sir, how can these things be ? Describe to me the particular manner of these manifestations ;” I reply, in our Lord’s words to Nicodemus, “Art thou a master in Israel,” nay more, a Christian, “and knowest not these things ?” “Verily I say unto you,” though we cannot fix the exact mode and precise manner of the breathing of the Spirit, yet “we speak what we do know, and testify what we have seen ; but you receive not our witness.” Marvel not, however, if we find it impossible to tell you all the particulars of a divine manifestation. You yourself, though you feel the wind, see its amazing effects, and hear the sound of it, cannot tell whence it cometh and whither it goeth ; much less could you describe it to the satisfaction of one who never heard or felt it himself. Many earthly things cannot be conceived by earthly men. The blind, for example, can never conceive the difference of colours ; what wonder then if natural men do not understand us when we tell them of heavenly things ?

Nevertheless, I would, in general, observe, that the man-

ner in which the manifestation of the Son of God is vouchsafed, is not the same in all persons, nor in the same person at all times. "The wind bloweth where it listeth," much more the Spirit of the living God. His thoughts are not as our thoughts; he dispenseth his blessings, not as we expect them, but as it pleases him. Most commonly, however, the sinner, driven out of all his refuges of lies, feels an aching void in his soul. Unable to satisfy himself any longer with the husks of empty vanity, dry morality, and speculative Christianity; and tired with the best form of godliness which is not attended with the power of it, he is brought to a spiritual famine, and hungers after heavenly food. Convinced of unbelief, he feels the want of the faith of God's operation. He sees that nothing short of an immediate display of the Lord's arm can bring his soul into the kingdom of God, and fill it with righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. Sometimes, encouraged by lively hopes, he struggles into liberty of heart, and prays with groanings which cannot be uttered. At other times, almost sinking under a burden of guilty fear, or stupid unbelief, he is violently tempted to throw away his hope, and go back to Egypt; but an invisible hand supports him, and, far from yielding to the base suggestion, he resumes courage, and determines to follow on to know the Lord, or to die seeking him. Thus he continues wandering up and down in a spiritual wilderness, until the Lord gives him the rest of faith, "the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."

This evidence comes various ways. Sometimes the spiritual eye is first opened, and chiefly, though not only, wrought upon. Then the believer, in a divine transforming light, discovers God in the man Christ, perceives unspeakable glories in his despised person, and admires infinite wisdom, power, justice, and mercy, in the blood of the cross. He reads the Scriptures with new eyes. The mysterious book

is unsealed, and everywhere testifies of Him whom his soul loves. He views experimentally, as well as doctrinally, the suitableness of the Redeemer's offices, the firmness of his promises, the sufficiency of his righteousness, the preciousness of his atonement, and the completeness of his salvation. He sees and feels his interest in all. Thus he beholds, believes, wonders, and adores. Sight being the noblest sense, this sort of manifestation is generally the brightest.

Perhaps his spiritual ear is first opened, and that voice, which raiseth the dead, "Go in peace, thy sins are forgiven thee," passes with power through his waiting soul. He knows, by the gracious effect, it is the voice of Him who said once, "Let there be light, and there was light." He is sensible of a new creation, and can say, by the testimony of God's Spirit, bearing witness with his spirit, "This is my Beloved's voice; he is mine, and I am his." I have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of my sins: and having much forgiven, he loves much, and obeys in proportion.

Frequently also Christ manifests himself first and chiefly to the spiritual feeling. He takes the burden of guilt, dejection, and sin, from the heavy-laden soul; and, in the room of it, imparts a strong sense of liberty, peace, love, and joy in the Holy Ghost. The ransomed sinner, enabled to overcome racking doubts or dull insensibility, believes now with the heart unto righteousness, and makes confession with the mouth unto salvation. "Surely," says he, "in the Lord I have righteousness and strength. This is the finger of God. This day is salvation come to my soul. None but Jesus could do this for me. The Lord he is God; he is my Lord and my God." This manifestation is generally the lowest, as being made to a lower sense; therefore great care ought to be taken not to confound it with the strong drawings of the Father, on which it borders. Some babes in Christ, who, like young Samuel, have not yet

their senses properly exercised to know the things freely given to them of God, are often made uneasy on this very account. Nor can they be fully satisfied, until they find the effects of this manifestation are lasting, or they obtain clearer ones by means of the nobler senses—the sight or hearing of the heart.

III. Though I contend only for those discoveries of Christ which are made by the internal senses, because such only are promised to all; yet I cannot, without contradicting Scripture, deny that the external senses have been wrought upon in some manifestations. When Abraham saw his Saviour's day, he was, it seems, allowed to wash his feet with water, (Gen. xviii, 4,) as afterward the penitent harlot did with her tears. And Saul, in his way to Damascus, saw Jesus's glory and heard his voice, both externally and internally; for they "that journeyed with him saw the light, and heard a voice," though they could not distinguish the words which were spoken.

Sometimes also manifestations, though merely internal, have appeared external to those who were favoured with them. When the Lord called Samuel, in Shiloh, the pious youth supposed the call was outward, and ran to Eli, saying, "Thou calledst me;" but it seems the voice had struck his spiritual ear only, otherwise the high priest, who was within hearing, would have heard it as well as the young prophet. And though Stephen steadfastly looked up to heaven, as if he really saw Christ there with his bodily eyes, it is plain he discovered him only with those of his faith; for the roof of the house where the court was held bounded his outward sight; and had Christ appeared in the room, so as to be visible to common eyes, the council of the Jews would have seen him, as well as the pious prisoner at the bar.

Hence we learn, 1st. That the knowledge of spiritual things, received by spiritual sense, is as clear as the know-

ledge of natural things, obtained by bodily sense. 2dly. That it is sometimes possible to be doubtful, whether the outward eye or ear is not concerned in particular revelations: since this was not only the case of Samuel, but of St. Paul himself, who could not tell whether the unspeakable words he heard in paradise struck his bodily ears, or only those of his soul. 3dly. That no stress is to be laid upon the external circumstances which have sometimes accompanied the revelation of Christ. If aged Simeon had been as blind as old Isaac, and as much disabled from taking the child Jesus in his arms as the paralytic, the internal revelation he had of Christ could have made him say, with the same assurance, "Now, Lord, let thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes have seen thy salvation." If the apostle had not been struck to the ground, and his eyes dazzled by outward light, his conversion would not have been less real, provided he had been inwardly humbled and enlightened. And if Thomas, waiving the carnal demonstration he insisted upon, had experienced only in his inner man that Christ is the resurrection and the life, he could have confessed him with as great a consciousness he was not mistaken, as when he cried out, "My Lord, and my God!"

I am, sir, yours, &c.

LETTER III.

IV. WHY the Lord manifests himself to the children of men, is an important question, which I now come to consider. It is not, we may easily think, for the gratification of their curiosity, but for purposes worthy of his wisdom: and what these are, we shall soon learn, if we reduce divine manifestations to three general classes, extraordinary, ordinary, and mixed ones; and then consider the design and use of each, as they may be collected from Scripture.

1. To begin with manifestations of the extraordinary kind : they are such as are either merely external, or vouchsafed to a few only on particular occasions, and are by no means essential to salvation.

(1.) Some of these are calculated to rouse the thoughtless into consideration. Of this kind was the manifestation some were favoured with, a little before our Lord's passion : " As he prayed, there came a voice from heaven, saying, I have glorified my name, and will glorify it again. The people that stood by and heard it, said it thundered !" They looked upon the extraordinary call as something common and natural : " Others said, An angel spake to him. But Jesus said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes."

(2.) Others are intended as a last warning to notorious sinners. Of this nature was the terrifying sight Nebuchadnezzar had, in his second dream of " a Watcher and Holy One coming down from heaven, and crying aloud, Cut down the tree ;" and that of the mysterious hand which wrote Belshazzar's doom on the wall, while he profaned the sacred vessels in his night revels.

(3.) Some are designed for the protection of God's people, and the destruction or humiliation of their proud enemies : as when the " Lord looked to the Egyptians, through the pillar of fire, and troubled their host ;" when " he cast down great stones from heaven " upon the armies of the five kings, who fought against Israel ; or when he manifested his presence in Nebuchadnezzar's furnace, to quench the violence of the flame, preserve the three confessors, and convince the raging tyrant that God's kingdom ruleth over all.

(4.) The design of others is to encourage the children of God in dangerous enterprises, or direct them in important steps. Of this kind was that to Joshua, before he began the conquest of Canaan ; and that to St. Paul, when the Lord stood by him in the prison, and informed him he must bear witness to him also at Rome.

(5.) Some are calculated to appoint some persons to uncommon services and trials, or to the prophetic and ministerial office: as that in which Noah was commissioned to build the ark, Abraham to offer up Isaac, Moses to deliver Israel, Nathan to reprove David, Balaam to bless Israel, and Jeremiah to preach to the Jews.

(6.) Others again are designed to answer providential ends for the deliverance of the people of God, as those of Gideon; or spiritual ends of reproof, instruction, and consolation to the church throughout all ages, as most of the revelations vouchsafed to the prophets, and to St. John.

2. The manifestations essential either to the conversion of sinners, or edification of saints, and which the word of God and the experiences of Christians show to be common to all believers in all ages of the church, are of the ordinary kind, and their use or design is,

(1.) To make the word spirit and life, "quick and powerful, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder soul and spirit," that the gospel may not come to sinners "in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance."

(2.) To ease an anguished conscience, and impart the peace of God to a troubled mind: as in the case of broken-hearted David, mourning Hezekiah, weeping Peter, and Paul agonizing in prayer.

(3.) To reveal Christ to us, and in us, so as to make us savingly believe, and know in whom we have believed, according to the experiences of Peter, Lydia, Cornelius, and every living member of Christ.

(4.) To open a blessed intercourse, and keep up a delightful communion with Christ; as appears from the experiences of believers illustrated in the Canticles.

(5.) To silence the remains of self-righteousness, and deepen the humiliation of our souls; as in the case of Job. To make us grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord

Jesus Christ. To bruise Satan under our feet, yea, to bruise the serpent's head in our hearts, and seal the exceeding great and precious promises given to us, that we might be partakers of the divine nature, and continue immovable, always abounding in the work of faith, the patience of hope, and the labour of love. In a word, to "strengthen us with might, by God's Spirit, in the inner man, that Christ may dwell in our hearts by faith, and we may be filled with all the fulness of God."

(6.) To prepare us for great trials, support us under them, and comfort us after them. This was our Lord's experience before his temptation, after he had overcome the tempter, and when he was in the height of his agony. This was also the case of David, St. Paul, and of all the apostles, when they had been scourged for the name of Jesus; and it is still the case of all true and deep mourners in Sion.

(7.) And, lastly, to make us depart in peace, as Simeon; or die in perfect love with our enemies, and in the full triumph of faith, as St. Stephen. All who live and die in the Lord, partake, more or less, of these ordinary displays of his powerful presence; and I desire you, sir, to remember, that it is chiefly, if not only, in support of these important manifestations, I take up the pen.

3. The third class of manifestations is that of "mixed ones;" so called, because they are partly extraordinary, and partly ordinary. Some are ordinary in their design, and extraordinary in their circumstances. Of this sort was the manifestation to the apostles. Acts iv, 31. The design of it was merely common; that is, to comfort them under contempt, and encourage them to do good and suffer evil: but the shaking the place where they were assembled was an uncommon circumstance. The same thing may be said of the descent of the Holy Ghost on the one hundred and twenty, who were assembled in the upper room on the Day of Pentecost; and, some time after, upon

Cornelius and his soldiers. That they should be baptized with the Holy Ghost and spiritual fire was not extraordinary, since it is the common blessing which can alone make a man a Christian, or confirm him in the faith ; but that the sound of a rushing wind should be heard, and luminous appearances seen resting upon them, and that they should have been enabled to speak the wonderful works of God in other tongues, were uncommon circumstances attending their spiritual baptism.

Some manifestations are mixed, both as to their design and circumstances. That the iniquity of Isaiah should be put away, and St. Paul converted, were not uncommon things ; they are the common effects of ordinary manifestations : but that the prophet should be commissioned to preach to the Jews, and the apostle to open the eyes of the Gentiles, were extraordinary circumstances ; as also a flying cherub appearing to the one, and a light brighter than the sun blinding the other.

For want of distinguishing properly between what is ordinary and extraordinary in mixed manifestations, persons who are not possessed of a clear head, or, what is worse, of an honest heart, conclude that none but enthusiasts speak now of divine manifestations. If they hear it affirmed they must be converted as well as St. Paul, they pertly ask whether they are Jews, and whether they must be struck to the earth by a voice from heaven. They wilfully forget that our Lord spake to his hearers as sinful men, and not as bigoted Jews, when he said, "Except ye be converted, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven." They obstinately refuse to see that the circumstances of the apostle's falling to the ground, &c., were not essential to his conversion, and had no other use than to make his call more remarkable for the conversion of the Jews and comfort of the Christians. When the same prejudiced persons are told that they must be born of the Spirit, and receive

the Holy Ghost, as well as Cornelius and his servants; overlooking the ordinary baptism of the Spirit, they pitch upon the extraordinary circumstance of the gift of tongues, imparted for a season, to remove the prejudices of the Jews, and to draw the attention of the Gentiles; and think with a sneer and a charge of enthusiasm to overturn the apostolic saying, "If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his." Be not deceived, sir, by these persons. Acknowledge, that so sure as you want the regenerating knowledge of Christ, you want the manifestation of his Spirit, without which he can never be known savingly. To return :

Though I contend only for the ordinary manifestations of Christ, I am far from supposing that all extraordinary or mixed manifestations have ceased. Such a concession would savour too much of the spirit of infidelity which prevails in the church. They are more frequent than many imagine. To instance in one particular how far I am from acquiescing with that infidel spirit, I am so attached to that old book, the Bible, as to say of many, who pass for ministers of Christ, "Wo to the foolish prophets, that follow their own spirit, and have seen nothing; that say, The Lord says, and the Lord hath not sent them." I think the desire of being styled "reverend," or "right reverend," and the prospect of a living or a mitre, are very improper motives for assuming the sacred character. And I am such an enthusiast as to believe our church in the right for requiring that all her ministers should not only be called, but even *MOVED*, by the Holy Ghost, to take the office of ambassador for Christ upon themselves. (*Ordination.*)

V. Having mentioned the design and use of ordinary manifestations, it may not be improper to touch upon the abuse of them. Their genuine tendency is to humble to the dust. The language of those who are favoured with them is, "Will God indeed dwell on the earth?" "Lord, what is

man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" "Now that I see thee, I abhor myself. I am not worthy of the least of thy mercies. I am dust and ashes." But as there is nothing which the heart of man cannot be tempted to corrupt and pervert, so, as soon as the power attending the manifestation is a little abated, Satan begins to shoot his fiery darts of spiritual pride: "You are a peculiar favourite of Heaven," whispers that old serpent; "few are so highly blessed. All your enemies are scattered; you need not be so watchful in prayer, and so strict in self-denial; you shall never fall." If the believer is not upon his guard, and quenches not these fiery darts with his shield, as fast as the enemy throws them, he is soon wounded, and pride kindles again upon him.

St. Paul himself was in danger from this quarter: "There was given him a thorn in the flesh, a messenger of Satan, to buffet him, lest he should be exalted above measure, through the abundance of the revelations." Aaron and Miriam fell into this snare, when they spake against Moses, saying, "Hath the Lord indeed spoken only by Moses? Hath he not spoken by us also?" David likewise acknowledges his error in this respect: "In my prosperity, I said, I shall never be moved; thou, Lord, of thy goodness, hast made my hill so strong:" but my heart was lifted up, and my confidence partly carnal; therefore "thou didst turn thy face from me, and I was troubled." The way to avoid the danger is to foresee it; to look much to the lowly Jesus, and upon the first approach of a temptation to pride, to give, with double diligence, all the glory to Him that graciously bestowed all; and to take, with double care, all the shame of our sins to ourselves. St. Paul's direction in this case is excellent: "Because of unbelief some were broken off, and thou standest by faith. Be not highminded, but fear."

Another genuine effect of divine manifestations is an increase of confidence in the Lord, and of activity in his service. What holy boldness filled the souls of those worthies, who, "through faith, wrought righteousness, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens!" How did the love of Christ constrain the disciples to speak and act for God after the Day of Pentecost! Nothing could exceed their fortitude and diligence. Nevertheless, if the temptation to pride is yielded to, the Comforter is grieved, and carnal security, indolence of spirit, and indulgence of the flesh, insensibly prevail. The deluded professor, though shorn of his strength, like Sampson, fancies himself the same. "Soul," says he, "thou hast goods laid up for many years, even for ever: though the Lord manifest himself to thee no more, be neither uneasy nor afraid; he changes not." Sometimes the delusion grows to that height, that the farther he goes from the kingdom of God, the stronger he imagines his faith. He even speaks contemptuously of that kingdom. He calls "righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," "a frame, a sensible feeling," a low dispensation, beyond which he has happily got. He thanks God he can now rest upon the bare word, without an application of it to his heart; that is to say, he can be fully satisfied with the letter without the Spirit,—he can feed upon the empty husks of notions and opinions, as if they were power and life.

The end of this dreadful mistake is generally a relapse into gross sin. Witness the falls of David and Solomon; or, what is not much better, a settling in a form without the power of godliness, as the Laodiceans of old, and too many now, who have a name to live, and are dead. The only way to avoid this precipice is to follow the light of the first manifestation, and look daily for new visits from Christ, till he makes his abode with us, and we walk in the light as he is in the light. A manifestation of the Spirit

last year will no more support a soul this year, than air breathed yesterday will nourish the flame of life to-day. The sun which warmed us last week must shine again this week. Old light is dead light. A notion of old warmth is a very cold notion. We must have fresh food daily ; and though we need not a new Christ, we need, perpetually, new displays of his eternal love and power. The Lord taught us this important lesson, by making the manna he gave Israel in the wilderness to disappear every day, and causing that which was not gathered fresh to breed worms, and stink. Nevertheless, as the mysterious food kept sweet in the golden pot in the ark, so does the heavenly power in Christ, to whom every true Israelite will come daily for new supplies of hidden manna, for fresh manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Thousands, by not considering this, seek the living among the dead ; fancying that a living Saviour is to be found in dead experiences, and that all is well, though they live after the flesh, and are, perhaps, led captive by the devil at his will. But when their souls awake out of this dangerous dream, they will be sensible of their mistake, and frankly acknowledge, " God is not the God of the dead, but of the living ;" and that, " if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome, the latter end is worse with them than the beginning."

Leaving these lukewarm, formal Laodicean professors to the mercy of God, I subscribe myself, sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER IV.

SIR,—VI. That some persons are blessed with clearer, stronger, or earlier manifestations than others, is undeniable; and why it is so is one of the mysteries of God's kingdom that shall not be explained until the day of judgment. In the mean time, the following reflections may possibly cast some light on that dark subject, and help us to say, "He doeth all things well."

1. Our Lord suits the manifestations of himself to the various states of the church. Under the Mosaic dispensation, which consisted much in externals, divine manifestations had, generally, some external circumstances; but the Christian church, being formed upon a more spiritual plan, is favoured with revelations of a more spiritual and internal nature.

2. The Lord considers us as rational creatures in a state of probation. Were he to indulge us with powerful, incessant, overwhelming discoveries of himself, he would rather violently force than gently lead us to repentance and obedience. Every day is not a day of pentecost. Soon after the Son of God had seen the heavens open, he was led into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil; and so is his spouse after him. Hosea ii, 14. St. Paul, by observing that he was not disobedient to the heavenly vision, and that he kept his body under, lest he should become a castaway, intimates that his bright manifestation was not of such continuance and force but he might have disobeyed, as Jonah did in a similar case. Some have, in fact, resisted bright manifestations in their day; witness Cain, Judas, Balaam, Saul, Nebuchadnezzar, and the Israelites who perished in the wilderness: and too many backsliders are resisting them now. So sure, then, as there is a time of trial for faith, hope, and patience, there is also

an abatement of the power which attends divine manifestations.

3. Our wise Redeemer proportions the means to the end. If the effect of the manifestation of his love is to be exceeding great, the manifestation must be exceeding bright. Suppose the burden of guilt and hardness, temptation and sorrow, under which one groans, is ten times greater than that which oppresses another, it is plain, the manifestation which is to remove the tenfold weight is to be ten times stronger. The same rule holds also with regard to sufferings and labours. The hotter the fight of afflictions God's children are to go through, the stronger and the brighter also is the celestial armour put upon them at the revelation of the Captain of their salvation.

4. Neither can it be doubted, but that our good God, in fixing the degree of divine manifestation, hath a peculiar respect to the state and capacity of the souls to whom he discovers himself. The deeper sinners mourn for him, the deeper he makes them drink of the cup of salvation at his appearing. Blessed are they that greatly hunger and thirst after righteousness; their souls are thereby greatly enlarged to receive the oil of gladness and the wine of the kingdom. Blessed are the poor in spirit, those whose souls are empty as the vessels of the desolate widow in the days of Elisha: when the heavenly prophet shall visit them, the streams of his fulness shall certainly flow according to the degree of their emptiness.

5. A skilful physician prescribes weaker or stronger medicines, according to the state of his patients. So does the Physician of souls: he weighs, if I may so speak, every dram of the heavenly power in the scales of goodness and wisdom. He knows what quantity of the heavenly cordial our spirits can bear, and will not, without the greatest care, put the strong wine of his powerful love into a weak vessel. He sees, that as some persons can stand for a time the

sight of the meridian sun, when others are hurt by the first appearance of a taper; so some Christians can bear the strong beams of his gracious presence, while others are almost overpowered by his fainter rays.

6. If some live and die without any manifestations of the Redeemer's love and glory, the reason of it may possibly be found in the abysses of his justice and goodness. They grieve and quench the Spirit that convinces the world of sin; and it is very fit they should not have him as a Comforter whom they obstinately reject as a reprover. Add to this, that as our Lord foresees, if such people were favoured with tokens of his more distinguishing condescension, they would only abuse them, as Cain and the Pharisees did, he puts them not to the trial, nor suffers them to enhance their guilt by trampling richer mercy and love under foot; so that this seeming severity is, in fact, real benignity.

7. The Lord not only proportions the degree of his powerful appearance to the weakness of our souls, but also to that of our bodies. He knoweth whereof we are made, and remembers we are but flesh. If the natural sun, that glorious emblem of our Emmanuel, were to approach as near our earth, and shine as bright as possible, the insufferable blaze and heat would instantly blind and consume us. By a parity of reason, were our bright Sun of righteousness to manifest his unclouded glory, or to appear without the tempering medium of his manhood, no flesh could support the sight. The brain, unable to bear the high operations of the soul, would turn; the heart of the wicked, swelled with intolerable pangs of fear, and that of the righteous, dilated by overwhelming transports of joy, would instantly burst. God, therefore, says, "No man can see my face," without some dimming veil, "and live." Hence arose, likewise, the grateful exclamations of Manoah and others, when the Lord had manifested himself to them, con-

cealed under human appearances, "We have seen God, and live! We have beheld him, and are not consumed!"

8. This may, perhaps, help us to account why the Lord still hides his face from some of his sincere seekers. They sit begging by the wayside of his ordinances, and yet he deos not pass by so as to restore to them their spiritual sight, that they might know him. In all probability he designs them such a bright manifestation as they are not yet able to bear. When their hearts are strengthened for the heavenly vision, it shall speak. Let them only wait for it. Let patience have its perfect work, and faith in the word be tried to the uttermost; and he that cometh will come, and will not tarry. He will bring his reward with him; and a moment of his presence will make them abundant amends for the waiting of an age. Were he to appear before they are prepared by the humiliation of repentance and the patience of hope, they would be in the case of those carnal Israelites, who, far from being able to commune with God, could not so much as speak to Moses when he came down from the mount, without first obliging him to put a veil over his shining face.

Peter, James, and John, were, it seems, the foremost of the apostles in spiritual strength and boldness; nevertheless, the manifestation they had of Christ on the mount almost overwhelmed them. Their body sunk under the weight of his glory, and when they came out of their sleep or trance, they could not recover themselves; "they knew not what they said." This had been before the case of Daniel, and was once more that of St. John. The comeliness of the man greatly beloved was turned to corruption; he retained no strength. And the beloved apostle, when he saw his Saviour with some additional beams of glory, "fell at his feet as dead." St. Paul not only lost his sight on such an occasion, but was near losing his life, being unable to take any refreshment for three days and three

nights. And it is also generally supposed that Moses actually died under the overpowering displays of the Redeemer's love. Hence we learn that God's way and time are best, and that we are to leave both to his gracious wisdom; using the means in which he has promised to manifest himself to those who diligently seek him.

VII. What those means are, is what I come in the last place to consider. The agent or author of every divine manifestation is the eternal God, one in three, and three in one. The Father reveals the Son freely, the Son freely discovers himself, and the Holy Ghost freely testifies of him. Nevertheless, the Scriptures, in general, attribute this wonder of grace to the blessed Spirit: "No man can" experimentally "say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost." It is his peculiar office to convince the world of righteousness, by giving us to know savingly the Lord our righteousness: "He shall glorify me," says Christ; "for he shall take of mine, and show it unto you." And this he does, without any merit of ours, in the means which God hath appointed, and which he enables us to use aright.

These means are both outward and inward. The outward are what our church calls "the means of grace;" particularly hearing or reading the word, partaking of the sacraments, and praying together with one accord for the manifestation of the Spirit, as the primitive Christians did. Acts ii, 1. These means are to be used with the greatest diligence, but not to be trusted to: the only proper object of our confidence is God, who works all in all. It was not Moses's rod which parted the Red Sea, but that almighty Arm which once divided the water from the water without a rod. Nevertheless, as Moses was not to throw his rod away, under pretence of trusting in God alone, neither was he to rely on the weak instrument, as if the divine power resided in it.

Though the Lord in general works by means, he ties himself to none, and sometimes works without any. The same

Spirit which fell upon Cornelius, while Peter preached, fell upon Peter on the Day of Pentecost without any preaching. And the same Lord who opened Lydia's heart by the ministry of St. Paul, opened the heart of St. Paul by the sole exertion of his power. We hence learn, that as, on the one hand, we ought not, with the profane and enthusiasts, to tempt the Lord, by neglecting the use of any of the means he hath appointed; so, on the other hand, we must beware of confining God to particular means, times, and places, as the bigoted and superstitious do; remembering, that when we are cut off from all outward means, it is our privilege to wait for the immediate display of God's arm, in the use of the inward means.

Of these, the first is a believing there will be a performance of the Lord's promise, and that he is willing and able to manifest himself to us, as he does not to the world: this is the very root of prayer, fervency, hope, and expectation. Without the actings of this preparatory faith, the soul droops, and becomes an easy prey to despondency, vanity, or sloth. Where this talent is buried, the Lord seldom works. "Believest thou that I am able to do this for thee?" is generally the first question that he puts to the seeker's heart. If it is answered in the negative, he can do no great miracle, because of this unbelief. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that St. Paul was blessed with the revelation of the Son of God, without any previous desire or expectation of it. In him and others was this scripture fulfilled, "I was found of them that sought me not; I was manifested to them that asked not after me." But, in general, where the gospel is preached, the Lord will be inquired of by the house of Israel to do this; and if he visit any with conviction, as he did St. Paul, it is only to make them pray, as that apostle did, until he manifests himself by the Holy Ghost, in a way of consolation and love.

The second inward means of the manifestation of Christ

is resignation as to the particular manner, time, and place of it. Through patience, as well as faith and prayer, we inherit this promised blessing. Some, according to their carnal wisdom and forward imagination, mark out the way in which salvation is to come to their hearts; but the Lord generally disappoints those unhumbled seekers, though, as in the case of Gideon, he may gratify one in a thousand: for believers are not "born of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." The Jews expected the Messiah, and there they were right: but they expected him in their own way, and there they stumbled and fell. While they looked for a mighty conqueror, another Alexander, to make them great, they overlooked the lowly Prince of peace, who came to make them good; and at last they crucified him as a base impostor. This Jewish disposition is in all by nature. Hence Christ is commonly rejected in the Spirit by Christians, as he was in the flesh by the Jews. We would have him come to give us an idle rest, but he appears to teach us to deny ungodliness, and fight the good fight of faith: this we do not like. Our nature wants to step at once into a throne: but he offers first to nail us to the tree, and to crucify our flesh with its affections and lusts: and from this we shrink as from the grave. We expect to be carried at once to the top of Mount Tabor, to see unutterable glory; but he leads us to Gethsemane to watch and pray, or to Calvary to suffer and die with him: here we recoil, and do not choose to know him. Our forward impatience dictates that he shall instantaneously turn our midnight into noon day; but instead of manifesting himself at once as the meridian sun, he will, perhaps, appear only as the morning star, that our light may shine more and more unto the perfect day. This defeats our counsel; we despise the day of small things, and do not think so low an appearance worth our notice and thanks. If you, sir, ever seek the saving knowledge of Jesus, never stop till you

can witness your sun goes down no more ; but, in the mean time, never slight the least ray of the heavenly light. The least may open into the broad day of eternity. Cease from your own false wisdom, and become as a little child, or you cannot enter the kingdom of heaven, and see the King in his beauty.

The third and last inward means I would recommend to mourners in Sion, is a tender regard for the reproofs of the Spirit, a constant attention to the drawings of the Father, obedience to the calls they have to secret prayer, and a fear of depending upon their duties, and not solely upon the faithfulness of Jesus. Whoever follows these directions, according to the grace given him, will, of course, cease from outward evil, and do, as he can, the little good his hand finds to do. This is a better way of waiting for the revelation of Christ, than to lie down in dejection and hopeless unbelief. All those who sullenly bury their one talent, and wilfully retain the accursed thing, complain in vain that their Lord makes long tarrying. They obstinately grieve his convincing Spirit, and then absurdly clamour, because he does not reward them for it, by the comforts of his heavenly presence. Let us not be so unreasonable. Let us "strive to enter in at the strait gate," remembering that "many shall seek to enter in, and shall not be able." But let us strive lawfully, not making ourselves a righteousness of our own seeking, knocking, and striving. The sun shines, not because we deserve it by undrawing our curtains, but because it is his nature. Jesus visits us, not because of any merit in our prayers, &c., but for his own sake, because his truth and compassion fail not. Free grace opens the door of mercy, not to works and merit, but to want and misery. That you and I may knock and press in, with all needy, penitent, believing sinners, is the earnest wish of a heart, which prompts me to subscribe myself, sir,

Yours, &c.

LETTER V.

SIR,—When I told you that, in all ages, Jehovah Jesus manifests himself in a peculiar manner to his people, you exclaimed against the assertion as altogether new and unscriptural. It lies upon me, therefore, to prove that antiquity and Scripture are on my side. I shall then in this letter appeal to the manifestations recorded in the Old Testament. You cannot expect all the revelations of any child of God, much less those of every one, to be mentioned in so short a history as that of the Bible. Nevertheless, enough is said on the point to convince us that, in every age of the church, God hath favoured the sons of men with peculiar displays of his presence.

Let us go back as far as Adam himself. Did not the Lord familiarly converse with him before the fall, both when he presented him with a partner, and when he brought every beast of the field before him, to see what he would call them? Did he not visit him after the fall, to pronounce his sentence, and to promise that he would become the woman's seed, and bruise the serpent's head? Was not this manifestation granted to Abel, when the Lord had respect to his sacrifice: the very cause of Cain's envy, wrath, and murder? Did not Enoch's walking with God imply a constant union and communion with Emmanuel? And how could this union have taken place if the Lord had not first revealed himself to the patriarch? Must not two persons meet and agree, before they can walk and converse together?

Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord, and, in consequence of it, was made acquainted with his righteous designs, and received directions how to escape from a perishing world. The history of Abraham is full of accounts of such manifestations. In one of them the Lord

called him out of his sins, and from his kindred, to go both to the heavenly and earthly Canaan. In others, he promised him Isaac, and Isaac's mysterious seed. Several years after, for the trial of his faith, he commanded him to sacrifice that favourite son; and when the trial was over, he testified his approbation of Abraham's conduct. He went farther. Read Gen. xviii, and you will see how the divine philanthropy, or the love of God toward man, appeared, in his condescending to clothe himself, beforehand, with the nature he was to assume in the virgin's womb, and to converse, in this undress, with the father of the faithful as a prince with his favourite, or a friend with his confident.

Sarah and Hagar, Isaac and Rebekah, had their divine manifestations; but those of Jacob deserve our particular attention. When he fled to Syria from the face of his brother Esau, and lay desolate in a field, having only a heap of stones for his pillow, the God of all consolation appeared to him: "And, behold, the Lord stood above" the mysterious ladder, on which the angels of God ascended and descended, "and said, I am the Lord; behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places, whither thou goest. And Jacob called that place Beth-el, the house of God, and the gate of heaven:" as if he had wanted to intimate, no one ever found the gate of heaven but by a manifestation of Christ, who is alone the way to the Father, and the door into glory. When the same patriarch returned to Canaan, and was left alone one night, there wrestled a man with him till the breaking of the day. And when this extraordinary person said, "Let me go, for the day breaketh;" he replied, "I will not let thee go, unless thou bless me:" and he blessed him there, acknowledging that he had power with man and God, even with him whose name is Emmanuel, God with us. "And Jacob called the name of the place Peniel," the face of

God ; “for he said, I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved.” The design of this manifestation was merely to strengthen his faith ; and we learn from it, that the children of faithful Abraham wrestle in prayer with the God-man, as Jacob did, till they prevail, and are blessed as he was.

Moses was favoured with numberless manifestations, sometimes as prime minister of the king of the Jews, and at other times only as a common believer. “There appeared to him, in the wilderness of Mount Sinai, the angel of the Lord in a flame of fire in a bush ; and when Moses saw it, he drew near, and the voice of the Lord came unto him, saying, I am the God of thy fathers.” Acts vii, 30, &c. Many partook of a sight equally glorious : “Moses, Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, went up and saw the God of Israel ; and there was under his feet as it were a paved work of sapphire stone, and as it were the body of heaven in his clearness. And upon the nobles of the children of Israel he laid not his hand : also they saw God, and did eat and drink.” Exod. xxiv, 9–11. “Behold,” said Moses upon the occasion, “the Lord our God hath showed us his glory, and we have heard his voice out of the midst of the fire ; and we have seen this day that God doth talk with man, and he liveth.” Deut. v, 24. All Israel shared sometimes in the glorious manifestation : “They all drank of that” spiritual “Rock that followed them,” says St. Paul ; “and that Rock was Christ.” “The cloud of the Lord was upon the tabernacle by day,” says the Jewish historian, “and fire was upon it by night, in the sight of all the house of Israel.” “It came to pass, as Moses entered into the tabernacle, the cloudy pillar descended, and stood at the door of the tabernacle, and the Lord talked with Moses. And all the people saw the cloudy pillar, and rose up and worshipped, every man in the door of his tent. And the Lord spake to Moses face

to face, as a man speaketh to his friend." Exod. xxxiii, 9-11. So indulgent was Emmanuel to him, that when he said, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory," the Lord answered, "I will make all my goodness pass before thee; but thou canst not see my face," without some veil, "and live. And," O astonishing condescension! "the Lord descended in the cloud, and stood with him, and proclaimed the name of the Lord." Jehovah Jesus passed before him, and proclaimed, "Jehovah, Jehovah," that is, revealed to him the Father and the Holy Ghost, one merciful God together with himself. And Moses made haste, bowed his head toward the earth, and worshipped." These displays of divine goodness and glory left a divine impression on the countenance of the man of God; his face shone so transcendently glorious, that the children of Israel were afraid to come nigh him; and he was obliged to put a veil upon it, before he could converse with them. Though this appears very extraordinary, the apostles inform us that what happened to the countenance of Moses, happens to the souls of all believers. By faith they behold the Lord through the glass of gospel promises; and beholding him they are made partakers of the divine nature: they are changed into the same image from glory to glory.

Joshua, Moses's successor, was blessed with many such manifestations, each of which conveyed to him new degrees of courage and wisdom. To instance in one only: "When he was by Jericho, he lifted up his eyes and looked, and behold, there stood a man over against him, with his sword drawn in his hand. And Joshua went to him, and said, Art thou for us, or for our adversaries? And he said, Nay, but as Captain of the Lord's host am I come. And Joshua," sensible it was Jehovah, "fell on his face to the earth, worshipped, and said to him, What says my Lord to his servant? And the Captain of the Lord's host said to Joshua, Loose thy shoe from off thy foot; for the

place whereon thou standest is holy ground ; and Joshua did so." Josh. v, 13, &c. Every true discovery of Christ hath a similar effect. It humbles the sinner, and makes him worship in the dust. He sees "holiness to the Lord" written upon every surrounding object ; he is loosed from earth and earthly things ; and the towering walls of sin fall before him, as those of Jericho, soon after this manifestation, did before Joshua.

When that chief was dead, the same heavenly person, called "the Angel of the Lord," came from Gilgal to Bochim, and spake such words to all the children of Israel, that the people were universally melted ; they lifted up their voice, wept, and sacrificed. Judges ii, 1-5. Nothing can so effectually make sinners relent as a sight of Him whom they have pierced. When they have it, whatever place they are in becomes a Bochim, a valley of tears and adoration.

Not long after, the Lord manifested himself to Deborah, and by the wisdom and fortitude communicated to her in that revelation, she was enabled to judge Israel, and lead desponding Barak to certain victory, through nine hundred chariots of iron.

The condescension of our Emmanuel appears in a still more striking light, in the manifestation which he vouchsafed to Gideon. This mysterious "Angel of the Lord," again and again called "Jehovah," "came and sat under an oak in Ophrah, appeared to Gideon, and said, The Lord is with thee, and thou shalt smite the Midianites as one man. And the Lord looked upon him," (what a courage-inspiring look was this ! as powerful, no doubt, as that which met cursing Peter's eye, and darted repentance to his heart !) "and he said, Go in this thy might ; have not I sent thee ? And Gideon said, Alas ! O Lord God, for because I have seen the Angel of the Lord face to face. And the Lord said unto him, Peace be unto thee ; fear not :

thou shalt not die." Thus strengthened and comforted, he built an altar to Jehovah-Shalom, and threw down the altar of Baal. Judges vi, 11, &c. Hence we learn that, when Jesus manifests himself to a sinner, he fills him with a noble contempt of Baal, an effectual resolution to break down his altars, and a divine courage to shake off the yoke of the spiritual Midianites. He imparts to him a comfortable assurance that the bitterness of death is past, and that Jehovah-Shalom, the God of peace, even Christ our peace, is with him; and the sinner, constrained by the love of Christ, gives him his believing heart, and offers sacrifices of thanksgiving on that best of altars. Here begins such a free intercourse between the Redeemer and the redeemed, as we find began between the Lord and Gideon, only of a far more spiritual and delightful nature.

Some years after, the same Angel of God appeared to Manoah's wife, and promised her a son. Her husband prayed for the same manifestation. God hearkened to his voice. The heavenly personage manifested himself a second time. Manoah asked him his name, and the "Angel said to him, Why askest thou after my name, seeing it is secret?" I am not yet called "Jesus." Manoah offered a burnt-offering: the Angel received it at his hands; and, while he ascended in the flame of the altar, Manoah fell on his face to the ground, knew that he was the Angel Jehovah, and said to his wife, "We shall surely die, because we have seen God." She comforted him under his fears; and the birth of Samson, instead of their death, was the consequence of this twofold manifestation.

There was a time when Samuel did not yet know the Lord, neither was the Word of the Lord, that Word which was afterward made flesh, yet revealed unto him. The devoted youth worshipped in the dark, till "the Lord appeared again in Shiloh, came, stood, and called, Samuel, Samuel; for the Lord revealed himself to him there, by

the Word of the Lord." From that memorable time "the Lord was with him, and did let none of his words fall to the ground." The intercourse between God and his prophet soon grew to so great a degree, that the sacred historian says, "The Lord told him in his ear" what he wanted him to be informed of. 1 Sam. iii, 7-19; ix, 15.

David had many manifestations of Christ and his pardoning love; and, far from supposing this blessing peculiar to himself as a prophet, he declares that "for this every one that is godly shall pray to God when he may be found." Psa. xxxii, 6. He knew his Shepherd's inward voice so well that, without it, no outward message, though ever so comfortable, could restore peace to his troubled mind. When he had been convinced of his crimes of adultery and murder, by the close application of Nathan's parable, the prophet assured him the Lord had put away his sin; he should not die. This report would have contented many of our modern penitents; but nothing short of an immediate manifestation of the forgiving God could comfort the royal mourner: "Wash thou me," says he, "and I shall be clean." Nathan's words, though ever so true, cannot do this: speak thyself, merciful Lord, "make me hear joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice."

Exceeding remarkable was the revelation his son Solomon was favoured with: "In Gibeon," where he was gone to sacrifice, "the Lord appeared unto him in a dream by night, and God said, Ask what I shall give thee." Conscious of his greatest want, he asked "an understanding heart. The speech pleased the Lord, and God said, Because thou hast asked this thing, I have done according to thy word: lo, I have given it thee; and that also which thou hast not asked, both riches and honour." Though this promise was made to him in a dream, he knew by the change which he found in himself when he awoke, and by

the powerful evidence which accompanies divine manifestations, that it was a glorious reality. Fully persuaded of it, he scrupled not to offer peace-offerings, and make a feast to all his servants on the occasion. 1 Kings iii. Nor was this the only time Solomon was thus favoured. When he had built the temple, and prayed for a blessing upon it, "the Lord appeared to him a second time, as he had appeared to him in Gibeon, and said, I have heard thy prayer." 1 Kings ix, 2, 3.

Elijah is so famous for the power he had to obtain divine manifestations by the prayer of faith, that St. James, who had seen him on the mount with Christ and Moses, proposes him to the church for a pattern of successful wrestling with God. And who is the Lord God of Elijah, but the God that manifests himself to his worshippers, in opposition to Baal and other false gods, from whom neither visits nor answers can be obtained? The Lord answered him by fire at the foot of Mount Carmel, and by showers on the top; and "when he lodged in Mount Horeb in a cave, behold, the word of the Lord" (Jehovah-Jesus) "came to him, and said, What doest thou here, Elijah? Go forth, stand upon the mount before the Lord. And behold the Lord passed by;" and in his "still, small voice," comforted, supported, and directed him. 1 Kings xix, 9, 11, 12.

Micaiah, another man of God, "saw the Lord sitting on his throne, and all the host of heaven standing by him on his right hand and on his left." 1 Kings xxii, 19. Elisha was not only blessed with frequent manifestations of the Lord and his power, but of his heavenly retinue also. He saw in an hour of danger "the mountain full of horses and chariots of fire," ready to protect him; and, at his request, the Lord condescended to open his servant's eyes, that his drooping spirits might revive at the sight. 2 Kings vi, 17.

Eliphaz, one of Job's friends, related to him, that "in thoughts from visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth

on men, fear and trembling came upon him. Then a spirit passed before his face; it stood still, but he could not discern," that is, clearly distinguish, "the form thereof. An image was before his face, and he heard a voice saying, Shall mortal man be more pure than God?" As for Job, when he had long contended with his friends, the Lord answered him out of the whirlwind, and manifested himself in a manner to which that good man was before a stranger: "I have heard of thee by the hearing of the ear, but now mine eye seeth thee; wherefore, I abhor myself, and repent in dust and ashes." Job xxxviii, 1; xlii, 5, 6. Hence we learn that nothing but a discovery of the Lord can silence the vain reasonings of self-righteous pleas and unbelieving fears: this alone makes us to lie in deep prostration at our Maker's feet.

St. John informs us that Isaiah saw Christ's glory, and spake of him, when he described the glorious manifestation in which he received a new seal of pardoning and sanctifying love. "I saw the Lord," says he, "sitting upon his throne, high and lifted up; his train filled the temple. The seraphims, covering their faces with their wings, cried one to another, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts. Then said I, Wo is me, for I am undone, because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of people of unclean lips; for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. Then flew one of the seraphims, and touching me with a live coal from off the altar, he said, Thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged." Isa. vi, 1, &c. Many never witness the forgiveness of their sins till they see by faith the Lord of hosts, and are melted into repentance, and inflamed with love at the glorious sight. Isaiah not only beheld Christ's glory, but was blessed with the clearest views of his sufferings. He saw him as "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs:" and asked him why he was red in his apparel, and his

garments like him that treadeth the wine-fat? These revelations were not only calculated for the good of the church, but also for the establishment of the prophet's faith.

I shall not mention those of Ezekiel; they are so numerous, that a particular account of them would alone fill a letter. I refer you to the book itself. Jeremiah, speaking of God's people, says, in express terms, "The Lord hath appeared of old unto me, saying, Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love; therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee." Jer. xxxi, 3. Daniel enjoyed the same favour: he saw "the Ancient of days, and one like the Son of man coming with the clouds of heaven." We may naturally suppose that Daniel's three companions, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, were sensible of their heavenly Deliverer's presence. They were more concerned in the discovery than Nebuchadnezzar, who cried out, "Lo, I see four men loose, walking in the midst of the fire, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God."

It would be absurd to suppose that the lesser prophets, and other men of God to whom the word of the Lord came, had no discovery of the Lord himself, the essential Word. If some display of his presence had not attended their every revelation, might they not have said, "Thus says my warm imagination"—"Thus says my enthusiastic brain," as well as, "Thus says the Lord?"

From the variety and authenticity of these manifestations left upon sacred record, I conclude, that the doctrine I maintain, far from being new and unscriptural, is supported by the experiences of God's children for three thousand six hundred years, namely, from the creation of the world till the close of the Old Testament.

With respect to what is extraordinary, as to the design, and barely external, as to the circumstances of some of these manifestations, I refer you to the distinctions I made on that subject in my second letter. Should you object,

that the contents of this prove only that God favoured the patriarchs and Jews with immediate revelations of himself, because they had neither the gospel nor the Scriptures: I answer,—

1. The gospel was preached to them as well as to us. The patriarchs had tradition, which answered the end of the Scriptures in their day. The Jews, in the time of the judges, had not only tradition, but a considerable part of the Scriptures, even all the writings of Moses. Under the kings they had the Psalms, Job, Ecclesiastes, the Proverbs, and a thousand and five songs of Solomon, one of which only has been handed down to our times. They had also the book of Nathan the prophet, the prophecy of Ahijah the Shilonite, and the visions of Iddo the seer, which are now lost. These contained the substance of the Bible.

2. When the Lord answered Saul no more, neither by prophets nor by dreams, the reason assigned for it by the Holy Ghost is, not that the canon of Scripture was filled, and there was no more occasion for immediate revelations, but that the Lord was departed from him, and was become his enemy.

3. David, who had the honour of being a sacred writer himself, after his relapse into sin, could not be satisfied with the Psalms he had penned down, but mourned, prayed, and watered his bed with his tears, inconsolable, till the Lord immediately revealed his pardoning love, and said to his soul, “I am thy salvation.”

4. If, because we have the letter of Scripture, we must be deprived of all immediate manifestations of Christ and his Spirit, we are great losers by that blessed book, and we might reasonably say, “Lord, bring us back to the dispensation of Moses. Thy Jewish servants could formerly converse with thee face to face, but now we can know nothing of thee but by their writings. They viewed

thy glory in various wonderful appearances, but we are indulged only with black lines, telling us of thy glory. They had the bright Shekinah, and we have only obscure descriptions of it. They were blessed with lively oracles, and we only with a dead letter. The ark of thy covenant went before them, and struck terror into all their adversaries; but a book, of which our enemies make daily sport, is the only revelation of thy power among us. They made their boast of Urim and Thummim, and received particular, immediate answers from between the cherubim; but we have only general ones, by means of Hebrew and Greek writings, which many do not understand. They conversed familiarly with Moses their mediator; with Aaron their high priest; and Samuel their prophet: these holy men gave them unerring directions in doubtful cases; but, alas! the apostles and inspired men are all dead, and thou, Jesus, our Mediator, Priest, and Prophet, canst not be consulted to any purpose, for thou manifestest thyself no more. As for thy sacred book, thou knowest that sometimes the want of money to purchase it, the want of learning to consult the original, the want of wisdom to understand the translation, the want of skill or sight to read it, prevent our improving it to the best advantage, and keep some from reaping any benefit from it at all. O Lord, if, because we have this blessed picture of thee, we must have no discovery of the glorious original, have compassion on us, take back thy precious book, and impart thy more precious self to us, as thou didst to thy ancient people."

5. St. Paul declares, that though the Mosaic dispensation was glorious, that of Christ exceeds it in glory. But if Christ revealed himself immediately to the Jews, and to Christians only mediately, by the letter of a book, it is plain the apostle was mistaken; for no one can deny it is far more glorious to see the light of God's countenance

and hear his voice, than merely to read something about them in a book.

6. That particular manifestations of Christ, far from ceasing with the Jewish, have increased in brightness and spirituality under the Christian dispensation, I shall endeavour to prove in my next.

I am, sir, &c.

LETTER VI.

SIR,—According to my promise, I shall now prove that the New Testament abounds, as well as the Old, with accounts of particular revelations of the Son of God.

Before his birth he manifested himself to the blessed virgin, by the overshadowing power of the Holy Ghost. She rejoiced in God her Saviour, and gloried more in having him revealed as God in her soul, than in finding him conceived as man in her womb. Soon after, Joseph, her husband, was assured, in a heavenly dream, that the child she bore was Emmanuel, God with us. He revealed himself next to Elizabeth. When she heard the salutation of Mary, she was filled with the Holy Ghost, and made sensible that the virgin was the mother of her Lord. So powerful was this manifestation, that her unborn son was affected by it: the babe leaped in her womb for joy, and was filled with the Holy Ghost even from his mother's womb.

So important is a particular knowledge of Jesus, that an angel directed the shepherds, and a miraculous star the wise men, to the place where he was born; and there the Holy Ghost so revealed him to their hearts, that they hesitated not to worship the seemingly despicable infant as the majestic God, whom the heaven of heavens cannot contain.

Simeon, who waited for the consolation of Israel, had it revealed to him by the Holy Ghost, that he should not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. The promise was fulfilled; and while his bodily eyes discovered nothing but a poor infant, presented without pomp in the temple, his spiritual eyes perceived him to be the light of Israel, and the salvation of God. Nor was this extraordinary favour granted only to Simeon; for it is written, "All flesh shall see the salvation of God;" and St. Luke informs us, that Anna partook of the sight of the old Israelite, gave thanks to her new-born Lord, and spake of him to all that waited for redemption in Jerusalem.

When he entered upon his ministry, he first manifested himself to his forerunner. "I knew him not" personally, said John; "but he that sent me to baptize with water, said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he who baptizes with the Holy Ghost. And I saw, and bare record, that this is the Son of God, the Lamb that taketh away the sins of the world."

Jesus had manifested himself spiritually to Nathaniel under the fig-tree; and the honest Israelite, being reminded of that divine favour, confessed the author of it: "Rabbi," said he, "thou art the Son of God, thou art the King of Israel." Our Lord, pleased with his ready confession, promised that he should see greater things, enjoy brighter manifestations than these; that he should even see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of man.

The bare outward sight of our Saviour's person and miracles rather confounded than converted the beholders. What glorious beams of his Godhead pierced through the veil of his mean appearances, when, with supreme authority, he turned the buyers and sellers out of the temple; when he entered Jerusalem in triumph, and all the city

was moved, saying, "Who is this?" and when he said to those who apprehended him, "I am he," and they went backward, and fell to the ground! Nevertheless, we do not find that one person was blessed with the saving knowledge of him on any of these solemn occasions. The people of Galilee saw most of him, and yet believed least in him: "What wisdom is this which is given to this man," said they, "that such mighty works are wrought by his hands? Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary? And they were offended at him." Some went even so far as to ascribe his miracles to a diabolical power, affirming that he cast out devils by Beelzebub, the prince of the devils. Hence it appears, that if he had not, in some degree, revealed himself to the hearts of his disciples, when he said to them, "Follow me," they would never have forsaken all immediately and followed him. "He manifested forth his glory," says St. John, "and his disciples believed on him:" and yet, when the manifestation was chiefly external, how weak was the effect it produced even upon them! How was our Lord, after all, obliged to upbraid them with their unbelief, their little faith, and, on a particular occasion, with their having no faith! If we know, savingly, that Jesus is God with us, flesh and blood, that is, mere man with all his best powers, hath not revealed this to us, but our Father who is in heaven. "As no man knoweth the Father save the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him; so no man knoweth the Son but the Father, and he to whom the Spirit" proceeding from the Father "does reveal him. For no man can," savingly "say, that Jesus is" Jehovah, "the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost;" and "he that hath seen me," by this divine revelation, says Jesus, "hath seen the Father also; for I and the Father are one."

Had not our Lord revealed himself in a peculiar manner to sinners, no one would have suspected him to be God

manifest in the flesh. Till he discovers himself as he does not unto the world, "he hath no form nor comeliness," says Isaiah; "and when we see him, there is no beauty in him, that we should desire him; we hide as it were our faces from him; he is despised, and we esteem him not." He was obliged to say to the woman of Samaria, "I that speak to thee am He;" and to say it with a power that penetrated her heart, before she could believe with her heart unto righteousness. Then, indeed, divinely wrought upon, she ran, and invited her neighbours to draw living water out of the well of salvation she had so happily found.

If our Lord had not called Zaccheus inwardly as well as outwardly; if he had not made him come down from the pinnacle of proud nature, as well as from the sycamore-tree; if he had not honoured his heart with his spiritual, as he did his house with his bodily presence; the rich publican would never have received him gladly, nor would the Lord have said, "This day is salvation come to thy house, forasmuch as thou art a son of faithful Abraham."

Salvation did not enter into the heart of Simon, who admitted our Lord to his house and table, as well as Zaccheus. The penitent woman, who kissed his feet and washed them with her tears, obtained the blessing, which the self-righteous Pharisee despised. It was to her contrite spirit, and not to his callous heart, that the Lord revealed himself, as the pardoning God.

The blind man, restored to his bodily sight, knew not his heavenly Benefactor, till a second and greater miracle was wrought upon the eyes of his blind understanding. When Jesus found him, some time after he was cured, he said to him, "Dost thou believe on the Son of God?" He answered, "Who is he, Lord, that I might believe on him?" And Jesus, opening the eyes of his mind, and manifesting himself to him, as he does not unto the world, said, "Thou hast

both seen him, and it is he that talketh with thee." Then, and not till then, he could say from the heart, "Lord, I believe," and he worshipped him.

Both the thieves who were crucified with him heard his prayers and strong cries; both saw his patience and his meekness, his wounds and his blood. One continued to make sport of his sufferings, as though he had been a worse malefactor than himself; while the other, blessed with an internal revelation of his Godhead, implored his mercy, trusted him with his soul, and confessed him to be the King of glory, at the very moment when he hung tortured and dying as the basest of slaves.

St. Peter speaks so highly of the manifestation with which he and the two sons of Zebedee were favoured on Mount Tabor, that we ought not to pass over it in silence. They saw the kingdom of God coming with power; they beheld the King in his beauty. "His face did shine like the sun, and his raiment became white as light; a bright cloud overshadowed him, and behold a voice out of the cloud, which said, This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye him."

Nor did our Lord reveal himself less after his resurrection. Mary sought him at the grave with tears. As she turned herself, she saw him standing, but knew not that it was Jesus. He said unto her, "Why weepest thou? Whom seekest thou?" She, supposing him to be the gardener, inquired after the object of her love; until Jesus, calling her by her name, manifested himself to her as alive from the dead. Then she cried out, "Master!" and in her transport would have taken her old place at his feet.

With equal condescension he appeared to Simon, that he might not be swallowed up with overmuch sorrow. True mourners in Sion weep, some for an absent God, as Mary, others for their sins, as Peter; and they will not be comforted, no, not by angels, but only by Him, who is nigh to

all that call upon him, and is health to those that are broken in heart. He that appeared first to weeping Mary, and next to sorrowing Peter, will shortly visit them with his salvation. He is already with them, as he was with Mary, though they know it not; and he will soon be in them, the sure and comfortable hope of glory.

This observation is further confirmed by the experience of the two disciples, who walked to Emmaus, and were sad. Jesus drew near, joined, and comforted them. He made their hearts to burn within them while he talked with them by the way, and opened to them the Scriptures. But still their eyes were held, that they should not know him, before they were prepared for the overwhelming favour. And it was not until he sat at meat with them, that their eyes were opened, and they knew him, in the breaking of bread. By a fatal mistake, many professors in our day rest satisfied with what did not satisfy the two disciples. They understood the Scriptures, their hearts burned with love and joy; Jesus was with them, but they knew him not, until the happy moment when he fully opened the eye of their faith, and poured the light of his countenance on their ravished spirits. Happy those, who, like them, constrain an unknown Jesus by mighty prayers to tarry with them, until the veil is taken away from their hearts, and they know in whom they have believed.

Frequent were the manifestations of Jesus to his disciples before his ascension. An angel appeared to two of the holy mourners, and said to them, "Fear not; for I know that ye seek Jesus, who was crucified. He is risen from the dead. As they ran with fear and great joy to tell his disciples, Jesus met them, saying, All hail! and they came, held him by the feet, and worshipped him." The same day in the evening, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled for fear of the Jews, came Jesus, and stood in the midst. They were terrified; but with his

wanted goodness he said, "Peace be unto you!" He showed them his hands and his feet; ate with them as he had done of old with Abraham; and to testify an inward manifestation of the Holy Ghost, which he imparted to them, breathed upon them, as the Spirit breathed upon their minds; and thus he opened their understandings, that they might understand the Scriptures. Out of condescension to Thomas, he showed himself to them a second time, in the like manner; and a third time at the Sea of Tiberias; and afterward he was seen of above five hundred brethren at once.

You will perhaps say, sir, that these manifestations ceased when Christ was ascended to heaven. This is true with respect to the manifestation of a body of such gross flesh and blood, as may be touched with material hands. In this sense believers know Christ after the flesh no more. Our Lord, by his gentle reproof to Thomas, discountenanced our looking for carnal manifestations of his person, and I have declared again and again that they are not what I contend for.

But that spiritual manifestations of Christ ceased at his ascension, is what I must deny, if I receive the Scripture. On the contrary, they became more frequent. Three thousand were pricked to the heart on the Day of Pentecost, and felt their need of a visit from the heavenly Physician. He then came revealed in the power of his Spirit, with whom he is one. They received the gift of the Holy Ghost, whose office it is to manifest the Son. For the promise was unto them and their children, and to as many as the Lord our God shall call. Witness the last words of Christ in St. Matthew's Gospel, "Lo! I am with you always, even unto the end of the world."

Time would fail me to tell of the five thousand converted some days after; of Cornelius and his household, Lydia and her household; in a word, of all who were truly brought to Christ in the first age of Christianity. "The Lord open-

ed their hearts. The Holy Ghost fell upon them, and they walked in his comforts. Christ was evidently set forth crucified before their spiritual eyes. He dwelt in their hearts by faith; they lived not, but Christ lived in them." They agreed in saying with St. Paul, "If any man have not the Spirit of Christ," by whom he is savingly known, "he is none of his."

Stephen's experience is alone sufficient to decide the point. When brought before the council, they all saw his face, as it had been the face of an angel. Being full of the Holy Ghost, he wrought no miracle, he spake no new tongue, but "looked steadfastly up into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, Behold, I see the heavens opened, and the Son of man standing on the right hand of God." This manifestation was calculated only for the private encouragement and comfort of the pious deacon. It answered no other end but to enrage the Jews, and make them account him a greater blasphemer and a wilder enthusiast than they did before. Accordingly they cried aloud, stopped their ears, ran upon him, cast him out of the city, and stoned him; while Stephen, under the powerful influence of the manifestation, kneeled down, and called upon God, saying, "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit, and lay not this sin to their charge." Hence we learn, first, that nothing appears so absurd and wicked to Pharisees and formalists, as the doctrine I maintain. They lose all patience when they hear that Christ really manifests himself to his servants. No blasphemy like this in the account of those who are wise, learned, and prudent in their own eyes. Secondly, that the most exalted saints need a fresh manifestation of the glory, love, and presence of Christ, that they may depart this life in the triumph of faith.

If you object that Stephen was thus favoured, because he was about to suffer for Christ, and that it would be great

presumption to expect the like support, I reply in the five following observations: 1. We are called to suffer for Christ, as well as Stephen, though perhaps not in the same manner and degree. 2. We often need as much support from Christ, to stand against the children of men that are set on fire, whose teeth are spears and arrows, and their tongues a sharp sword, and to quench the fiery darts of the devil, as the martyr did to stand a shower of stones. 3. It is perhaps as hard to be racked with the gout, or to burn several days in a fever, on a sick bed, as you or I may be forced to do, as to be for a few minutes with Shadrach and his companions in a burning furnace, or to feel for a fleeting moment the anguish of bruised flesh, and a fractured skull, with our triumphant martyr. No one knows what pangs of body and agonies of soul may accompany him through the valley of the shadow of death. If our Lord himself was not above being strengthened by an angel that appeared to him from heaven, surely it is no enthusiasm to say that such feeble creatures as we are stand in need of a divine manifestation, to enable us to fight our last battle manfully, and to come off more than conquerors. 4. We betray unbelief, if we suppose that Christ cannot do for us what he did for Stephen; and we betray our presumption, if we say we want not the assistance which this bold champion stood in need of. 5. The language of our church is far different: "Grant," says she, in her collect for that saint's day, "O Lord, that in all our sufferings here on earth for the testimony of thy truth, we may steadfastly look up to heaven, and, by faith, behold the glory that shall be revealed; and being filled with the Holy Ghost, may learn to love and bless our persecutors, by the example of thy first martyr, St. Stephen, who prayed for his murderers to thee, O blessed Jesus, who standest at the right hand of God to succour all those who suffer for thee."

You see, sir, that I have the suffrage of the Church of

England, and yours, too, if you do not renounce our excellent liturgy ; so that, if I am an enthusiast for expecting to be filled with the Holy Ghost, and by faith to behold the glory that shall be revealed, as well as St. Stephen, I am countenanced by a multitude of the best and greatest men in the world.

But suppose you reject the testimony of St. Stephen, and of all our clergy, (when in the desk,) touching the reality, and the necessity too, of our Lord's manifesting himself on earth, after his ascension into heaven, receive at least that of St. Luke and St. Paul. They both inform us, that "as Saul of Tarsus went to Damascus, the Lord, even Jesus, appeared to him in the way. Suddenly there shone a light from heaven above the brightness of the sun, so that he fell to the earth, and heard a voice, saying, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me ? And he said, Who art thou, Lord ? And the Lord said, I am Jesus, whom thou persecutest." So powerful was the effect of this manifestation of Christ, that the sinner was turned into a saint, and the fierce blaspheming persecutor, into a weeping, praying apostle.

Methinks I hear you say, "True, into an apostle ; but are we called to be apostles ?" No, sir ; but we are called to be Christians, to be converted from sin to holiness, and from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of God's dear Son. St. Paul's call to the apostleship is nothing to his being made a child of God. Judas was a Christian by profession, an apostle by call, and a devil by nature. And what is Judas in his own place to the meanest of God's children ?—to poor Lazarus in Abraham's bosom ? All who go to heaven are first turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God. This turning sometimes begins by a manifestation of Christ : witness the authentic account of Colonel Gardiner's conversion, published by his judicious friend, Dr. Doddridge ; and the more authentic one of our apostle's conversion, recorded three times by St. Luke.

And I dare advance, upon the authority of one greater than St. Luke, that no one's conversion ever was completed without the revelation of the Son of God to his heart: "I am the way and the door," says Jesus; "no man cometh to the Father but by me." "Look unto me and be ye saved, all ye ends of the earth." Our looking to him for salvation would be to as little purpose, were he not to manifest himself to us, as our looking toward the east for light if the sun were not to rise upon us.

The revelation of Christ productive of St. Paul's conversion, was not the only one with which the apostle was favoured. "At Corinth the Lord encouraged and spake to him in the night by a vision: Be not afraid, but speak, and hold not thy peace; for I am with thee, and no man shall hurt thee." On another occasion, to wean him more from earth, Christ favoured him with the nearest views of heaven: "I knew a man in Christ," says he, "whether in the body or out of the body I cannot tell, who was caught up into the third heaven, into paradise, and heard words which it is not possible for man to utter." And he informs us further, that, lest he should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, a messenger of Satan was suffered to buffet him. When he had been brought before the Sanhedrim for preaching the Gospel, St. Luke informs us that "the night following the Lord stood by him, and said, Be of good cheer, Paul; for as thou hast testified of me in Jerusalem, so must thou bear witness also at Rome." The ship in which he sailed being endangered by a storm, there stood by him "the Angel of God, whose he was, and whom he served, saying, Fear not, Paul," &c.

St. Paul was not the only one to whom Christ manifested himself in this familiar manner. Ananias of Damascus was neither an apostle nor a deacon; nevertheless, to him "said the Lord in a vision, Ananias. And he said, Behold I am here, Lord; and the Lord said, Arise, and go into the street

which is called Straight, and inquire in the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus ; for behold he prayeth." In like manner, Philip was directed to go near and join himself to the eunuch's chariot. And St. Peter being informed that three men sought him, " Arise, said the Lord, and go with them, doubting nothing ; for I have sent them."

Whether we place these manifestations in the class of the extraordinary, or of the mixed ones, we equally learn from them, first, that the Lord Jesus revealed himself as much after his ascension as he did before ; secondly, that if he does it to send his servants with a gospel message to particular persons, he will do it much more to make that message effectual, and to bring salvation to those who wait for him.

As for the revelations of Christ to St. John, they were so many, that the last book of the New Testament is called the Revelation, as containing chiefly an account of them : " I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day," says the apostle ; " and I heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, saying, I am the first and the last. I turned to see the voice that spake with me ; and I saw one like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt with a golden girdle. His head and hair were as white as snow, and his eyes as a flame of fire, his feet like unto fine brass burning in a furnace, his voice as the sound of many waters, and his countenance as the sun shining in his strength. When I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his hand upon me, saying, Fear not ; I am the first and the last : I am he that liveth and was dead ; and, behold, I am alive for ever more ; and have the keys of hell and death. Write the things which are and shall be." One of the things which our Lord commanded John to write is a most glorious promise, that he stands at the door of the human heart, ready to manifest himself even to poor lukewarm Laodiceans ; and that, if any man hear his voice

and open,—if they are made conscious of their need of him, so as to open their hearts by the prayer of faith,—he will come in and feast them with his gracious presence, and the delicious fruits of his blessed Spirit. Therefore the most extraordinary of all the revelations, that of St. John in Patmos, not only shows that the manifestations of Christ run parallel to the canon of Scripture, but also gives a peculiar sanction to the ordinary revelations of him, for which I contend.

Having thus led you from Genesis to Revelation, I conclude by two inferences, which appear to me undeniable. The first, that it is evident our Lord, before his incarnation, during his stay on earth, and after his ascension into heaven, hath been pleased, in a variety of manners, to manifest himself to the children of men, both for the benefit of the church in general, and for the conversion of sinners, and the establishment of saints in particular. Secondly. That the doctrine I maintain is as old as Adam, as modern as St. John, the last of the inspired writers, and as Scriptural as the Old and New Testaments, which is what I wanted to demonstrate.

I am, sir, &c.

PASTORAL AND FAMILIAR
LETTERS.

PASTORAL AND FAMILIAR LETTERS.

I.—TO THE PARISHIONERS OF MADELEY.

BATH, *October 30, 1765.*

To those who love the Lord Jesus Christ, in and about Madeley : Peace be multiplied to you from God the Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, through the operations of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

By the help of divine Providence, and the assistance of your prayers, I came safe here. I was, and am still, a good deal weighed down, under the sense of my own insufficiency to preach the unsearchable riches of Christ to poor, dying souls.

This place is the seat of Satan's gaudy throne: the Lord hath, nevertheless, a few names here, who are not ashamed of him, and of whom he is not ashamed, both among the poor and among the rich. There are not many of the last, though blessed be God for any one: it is a great miracle if one camel passes through the eye of a needle, or, in other words, if one rich person enters into the kingdom of heaven. I thank God, none of you are rich in the things of this world. You are freed from a double snare, even from Dives's portion in this life. May you know the happiness attending your state ! It is a mercy to be driven to the throne of grace, even by bodily want, and to live in dependence on divine mercy for a morsel of bread.

I have been sowing the seed the Lord hath given me both in Bath and Bristol, and I hope your prayers have not been lost upon me as a minister ; for, though I have

not been enabled to discharge my office as I would, the Lord hath yet, in some measure, stood by me, and overruled my foolishness and helplessness. I am much supported by the thought, that you bear me on your hearts, and when you come to the throne of grace to ask a blessing for me, in the name of Jesus, the Lord does in no wise cast you out.

In regard to the state of my soul, I find, (blessed be God,) that as my day is, so is my strength to travel on, either through good or bad report. My absence from you answers two good ends to me:—I feel more my insufficiency, and the need of being daily ordained by Christ to preach his gospel; and I shall value the more my privileges among you, please God I return safely to you. I had yesterday a most advantageous offer made me, of going, free of cost, to visit my mother, brothers, and sisters in the flesh, whom I have not seen for eighteen years; but I find my relations in the spirit are nearer and dearer to me than my relations in the flesh. I have, therefore, rejected the kind offer, that I may return among you, and be comforted by the mutual faith both of you and me.

I hope, dear brethren, you improve much under the ministry of that faithful servant of God, Mr. Brown, whom Providence blesses you with. Make haste to gather the honey of knowledge and grace as it drops from his lips; and may I find the hive of your hearts so full of it, on my return, that I may share with you in the heavenly store! In order to this, beseech the Lord to excite your hunger and thirst for Jesus's flesh and blood, and to increase your desire of the sincere milk of the word. When people are hungry, they will find time for their meals; and a good appetite does not think a meal a day too much. As you go to your spiritual meals do not forget to pray all the way, and to feast your souls in hopes of hearing some good news from heaven, and from Jesus, the faithful, loving

friend whom you have there : and when you return, be sure to carry the unsearchable riches of Jesus's dying and rising love home to your houses, in the vessel of a believing heart.

Let your light be attended with the warmth of love. Be not satisfied to *know* the way to heaven, but walk in it immediately, constantly, and joyfully. Be all truly in earnest : you may, indeed, impose upon your brethren, by a formal attendance on the means of grace, but you cannot deceive the Searcher of hearts ; let him always see your hearts struggling towards him ; and if you fall through heaviness, sloth, or unbelief, do not make a bad matter worse by continuing helpless in the ditch of sin and guilt. Up, and away to the fountain of Jesus's blood. It will not only wash away the guilt of past sins, but strengthen you to tread all iniquity under your feet for the time to come. Never forget, that "the soul of the diligent shall be made fat," and that the Lord will spew the lukewarm out of his mouth, unless he gets that love which makes him "fervent in spirit, diligent in business, serving the Lord."

You know the way to get this love is, 1. To consider the free mercy of God, and to believe in the pardoning love of Jesus, who "died the just for the unjust, to bring us to God." 2. To be frequently, if not constantly, applying this faith, with all the attention of your mind, and all the fervour of your heart—"Lord, I am lost, but Christ hath died." 3. To try actually to love, as you can, by setting your affections on Christ, whom you see not ; and for his sake on your brethren whom you do see. 4. To use much private prayer for yourselves and others ; and to try to keep up that communion with God and your absent brethren. I beg, in order to this, that you will not forsake "the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is:" and when you meet as a society, be neither backward nor forward to speak. Esteem yourselves every one as the meanest in the company, and be glad to sit at the

feet of the lowest. If you are tempted against any, yield not to the temptation, and pray much for that love which hopes all things, and puts the best construction even upon the worst of failings. I beg, for Christ's sake, I may find no divisions nor offences among you on my return. "If there be any consolation in Christ, if any comfort of love, if any fellowship of the Spirit, if any bowels and mercies, fulfil ye my joy, that ye be like-minded, having the same love, being of one accord, and of one mind. Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind, let each esteem other better than themselves."

I earnestly request the continuance of your prayers for me, both as a minister and as your companion in tribulation. Ask particularly, that the Lord would keep me from hurting his cause in these parts: and that when Providence shall bring me back among you, I may be more thoroughly furnished for every good work. Pardon me, if I do not salute you all by name: my heart does it, if my pen does not. That the blessing of God in Jesus Christ may crown all your hearts, and all your meetings, is the earnest prayer of, my very dear brethren,

Yours, &c.

J. F.

II.—TO THE SAME.

OAKHALL, *September 23, 1766.*

To those who love or fear the Lord Jesus Christ at Madeley: Grace, peace, and love be multiplied to you from our God and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Providence, my dear brethren, called me so suddenly from you, that I had not time to take my leave and commend myself to your prayers: but I hope the good Spirit of our God, which is the Spirit of love and supplication, has brought me to your remembrance, as the poorest and weakest of Christ's ministers, and, consequently, as

one whose hands stand most in need of being strengthened and lifted up by your prayers. Pray on, then, for yourselves, for one another, and for him whose glory is to minister to you in holy things, and whose sorrow it is not to do it in a manner more suitable to the majesty of the gospel, and more profitable to your souls.

My heart is with you: nevertheless, I bear patiently this bodily separation, for three reasons. First, the variety of more faithful and able ministers whom you have during my absence, is more likely to be serviceable to you, than my presence among you; and I would always prefer your profit to my satisfaction. Secondly, I hope Providence will give me those opportunities of conversing and praying with a greater variety of experienced Christians, which will tend to my own improvement, and I trust, in the end, to yours. Thirdly, I flatter myself, that after some weeks' absence, my ministry will be recommended by the advantage of novelty, which (the more the pity) goes further with some, than the word itself. In the mean time I shall give you some advice, which, it may be, will prove both suitable and profitable to you.

1. Endeavour to improve daily under the ministry which Providence blesses you with. Be careful to attend it with diligence, faith, and prayer. Would it not be a great shame, if, when ministers come thirty or forty miles to offer you peace and pardon, strength and comfort, in the name of God, any of you should slight the glorious message, or hear it as if it was nothing to you, and as if you heard it not? See, then, that you never come from a sermon, without being more deeply convinced of sin and righteousness.

2. Use more prayer before you go to church. Consider that your next appearance there may be in a coffin; and entreat the Lord to give you now so to hunger and thirst after righteousness, that you may be filled. Hungry people never go fasting from a feast. Call to mind the text I

preached from, the last Sunday but one before I left you, "Wherefore, laying aside all malice," &c. (1 Pet. ii, 1.)

3. When you are under the word, beware of sitting as judges, and not as criminals. Many judge of the manner, matter, voice, and person of the preacher. You, perhaps, judge all the congregation, when you should judge yourselves worthy of eternal death; and yet, worthy of eternal life, through the worthiness of Him, who stood and was condemned at Pilate's bar for you. The moment you have done crying to God, as guilty, or thanking Christ as reprieved criminals, you have reason to conclude, that this advice is levelled at you.

4. When you have used a means of grace, and do not find yourselves sensibly quickened, let it be a matter of deep humiliation to you. For want of repenting of their unbelief and hardness of heart, some get into a habit of deadness and indolence; so that they come to be as insensible, and as little ashamed of themselves for it, as stones.

5. Beware of the inconsistent behaviour of those who complain they are full of wanderings in the evening under the word, when they have suffered their minds to wander from Christ all the day long. O! get acquainted with him, that you may walk in him and with him. Whatsoever you do or say, especially in the things of God, do or say it as if Christ was before, behind, and on every side of you. Indeed he is so, whether you consider it or not; for if, when he visibly appeared on earth, he called himself "the Son of man who is in heaven," how much more, then, is he present on earth now, that he makes his immediate appearance in heaven? Make your conscience maintain a sense of his blessed presence all the day long, and then all the day long you will have a continual feast; for can you conceive anything more delightful than to be always at the fountain of love, beauty, and joy;—at the spring of power, wisdom, goodness, and truth? Can there be a purer and

more melting happiness, than to be with the best of fathers, the kindest of brothers, the most generous of benefactors, and the tenderest of husbands? Now Jesus is all this, and much more, to the believing soul. O! believe, my friends, in Jesus now, through a continual now; and until you can thus believe, mourn over your unbelieving hearts; drag them to him, as you can; think of the efficacy of his blood, shed for the ungodly, and wait for the Spirit of faith from on high.

6. Some of you wonder why you cannot believe; why you cannot see Jesus with the eye of your mind, and delight in him with all the affections of your heart. I apprehend the reason to be one of these, or, perhaps, all of them.

First, you are not poor, lost, undone, helpless sinners in yourselves. You indulge spiritual and refined self-righteousness; you are not yet dead to the law, and quite slain by the commandment. Now the kingdom of heaven belongs to none but the poor in spirit. Jesus came to save none but the lost. What wonder, then, if Jesus is nothing to you, and if you do not live in his kingdom of peace, righteousness, and joy in the Holy Ghost?

Secondly. Perhaps you spend your time in curious reasonings, instead of casting yourselves, as forlorn sinners, at Christ's feet; leaving it to him to bless you, when, and in the manner and degree, he pleases. Know, that he is the wise and sovereign God, and that it is your duty to lie before him as clay, as fools, as sinful nothings.

Thirdly. Perhaps some of you wilfully keep idols of one kind or other; you indulge some sin against light and knowledge, and it is neither matter of humiliation nor confession to you. The love of praise, of the world, of money, and of sensual gratifications, when not lamented, are as implacable enemies to Christ as Judas and Herod. "How can you believe, seeing you seek the honour that cometh

of men?" Hew, then, your Agags in pieces before the Lord; run from your Delilahs to Jesus; cut off the right hand, and pluck out the right eye that offends you. "Come out from among them, and be separate, saith the Lord, and I will receive you." Nevertheless, when you strive, dare not to make yourself a righteousness of your strivings. Remember that meritorious, justifying righteousness, is finished and brought in, and that your works can no more add to it, than your sins can diminish from it. Shout then, "The Lord our Righteousness;" and if you feel yourselves undone sinners, humbly, yet boldly say, "In the Lord I have righteousness and strength."

When I was in London I endeavoured to make the most of my time: that is to say, to hear, receive, and practise the word. Accordingly, I went to Mr. Whitefield's tabernacle, and heard him give his society a most excellent exhortation upon love. He began by observing, "that when the apostle St. John was old, and past walking and preaching, he would not forsake the assembling himself with the brethren, as the manner of too many is, upon little or no pretence at all. On the contrary, he got himself carried to their meeting, and, with his last thread of voice, preached to them his final sermon, consisting of this one sentence, 'My little children, love one another.'" I wish, I pray, I earnestly beseech you to follow that evangelical, apostolical advice; and till God makes you all little children, little in your own eyes, and simple as little children, give me leave to say, my dear brethren, "love one another;" and, of course, judge not, provoke not, and be not shy one of another; but "bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." Yea, bear with one another's infirmities, and do not easily cast off any one; no, not for sin, except it is obstinately persisted in.

My sheet is full, and so is my heart, of good wishes for you, and ardent longings after you all. When I return,

let me have the comfort of finding you all believing and loving. Farewell, my dear brethren. The blessing of God be with you all! This is the earnest desire of

Your unworthy minister,

J. F.

III.—TO MRS. MARY CARTWRIGHT.

MADELEY, ———, 1773.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—As it may be long before you have an opportunity to hear a sermon, I find myself drawn by friendship and pastoral care to send you a few lines, to meditate upon to-morrow.

As I was longing for an opportunity to offer life, friends, and liberty to Him who is worth a thousand such alls, I thought I must wait for no other opportunity, and found another blessing in using the present moment. I did not forget to offer you among my friends, and I found it on my mind to pray and praise with you; and to beseech you to fulfil my joy, by giving me to see you all glorious within, and full of eager desire to be with our everlasting Friend. O, let us take a thousand times more notice of him, till the thought of him engrosses all other thoughts, the desire of him all other desires!

Nothing can reconcile me to let my friends go, but the fullest evidence that they are going to Jesus. If you go before me, let me not want that comfort. Let me never see you, but full of an earnest desire to do and suffer the will of our God. I wanted to see heavenly joy and glory beaming from your eyes last night, and I feared I saw them not. Pardon my fears, if they have no foundation. Charity thinks no evil, hopes all, and yet it is jealous with a godly jealousy; and the warmer the charity, the stronger and keener the jealousy. A doubt passed through my mind, whether you had not caught our dulness, whether

your soul is as near to God as it was some weeks ago. O! if the multiplied mercies of God toward us do not rouse us to the third heaven of gratitude, what will?

My prayer, my ardent prayer to God, and I make it now afresh, with tears of desire, is, that you may live as one who does not depend on another breath. Come, my dear friend, up with your heart, and spread the arms of your faith. Welcome Jesus. Believe till you are drawn above yourself and earth—till your flaming soul mounts, and loses itself in the Sun of righteousness. I want you to be a burning, shining light, setting fire to all the thatch of the devil, and kindling every smoking flax around you. Disappoint not the Saviour's hope, and mine. I expect to see you not only a risen Lazarus, and a spared Hezekiah, but a Mary at Jesus's feet, a Deborah in the work of the Lord.—There is what St. Paul calls a "being beside ourselves," which becomes you so much the better, as you are restored to us against hope—and for how long we know not.

Fulfil my joy, I say, which must droop till I can rejoice over you living, dying, or dead, "with joy unspeakable and full of glory." Give yourself much to believing, thankful, solemn prayer. I was condemned for not making more of the solemn opportunity I had with you last Thursday. O! if we are spared to meet again, let us pray until we wind our hearts into ardent praise, and then let us praise until we are caught up to heaven. Hold up our hands tomorrow, and if we meet on Monday, be it in the name of Christ, to pour the oil of joy into each other's hearts, by confessing him more heartily our God, our life, our present and never-dying friend. Farewell in him every way.

Yours, &c.

J. F.

IV.—TO MR. MICHAEL ONIONS.

BRISTOL, *July 11, 1776.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Having just seen at the Wells, Mr. Darby, who is going back to the Dale, I gladly seize the opportunity of letting you know what the Lord does for my soul and body. With respect to my better part, I feel a degree of righteousness, peace, and joy, and wait for the establishment of his internal kingdom in the Holy Spirit; and the hopes of my being rooted and grounded in the love that casts out every degree of slavish fear, grow more lively every day. I thank God I am not afraid of any evil tidings; my heart stands calm, believing in the Lord, and desiring him to do with me whatsoever he pleases. With respect to my body, I know not what to say, but the physician says, he hopes I shall do well; and so I hope and believe too, whether I recover my strength or not. Health and sickness, life and death, are best when the Lord sends them; and all things work together for good to those that love God.

I am forbid preaching; but, blessed be God, I am not forbid, by my heavenly Physician, to pray, believe, and love. This is a sweet work, which heals, delights, and strengthens. Let us do it till we recover our spiritual strength; and then, whether we shall be seen on earth or not will matter nothing. I hope you bear me on your hearts, as I do you on mine. My wish for you is, that you may be real possessors of an inward kingdom of grace: that you may so hunger and thirst after righteousness as to be filled; and that you may so call on your heavenly Father in secret, that he may reward you openly with abundance of grace, which may evidence to all, that he honours you because you honour him. O! be hearty in

the cause of religion. I would have you either hot or cold; for it is a fearful thing to be in danger of falling into the hands of the living God, and sharing the fate of the lukewarm. Be humbly zealous for your own salvation and for God's glory; nor forget to care for the salvation of each other. The case of wicked Cain is very common, and the practice of many says, with that wretch, "Am I my brother's keeper?" O! pray God to keep you by his mighty power, through faith, to salvation. Keep yourselves in the love of God, if you are there; and keep one another by example, reproof, exhortation, encouragement, social prayer, and a faithful use of all the means of grace. Use yourselves to bow at Christ's feet, as your Prophet; go to him continually for the holy anointing of his Spirit, who will be a teacher always near, always with you, always in you. If you have the inward Instructor, you will suffer no material loss, when your outward teachers are removed. Make the most of dear Mr. Greaves while you have him. While you have the light of God's word, believe in the light, that you may be the children of the light, fitted for the kingdom of eternal light, where I charge you to meet, with joy,

Your affectionate brother and minister,
J. F.

V.—TO THE PARISHIONERS OF MADELEY.

BRISTOL, *Oct. —, 1776.*

To all who fear and love God in and about Madeley; Grace and peace, power and love, joy and triumph in Christ, be multiplied to you, through the blood of the Lamb, through the word that testifies of the blood, and through the Spirit who makes the application.

I expected I should have been with you to see your love, and be edified by your conversation, but Providence

has hindered. Twice I had fixed the day of my departure from this place; and twice, the night before that day, I was taken worse than usual, which, together with the unanimous forbiddings of my spiritual, temporal, and medical friends here, made me put off my journey. The argument to which I have yielded is this: "There is yet some little probability, that if you stay here you might recover strength to do a little ministerial work; but if you go now you will ruin all." However, God is my witness, that if I have not ventured my life to come and see you, it was not from a desire to indulge myself, but to wait and see if the Lord would restore me a little strength, and add a few years to my life, that I might employ both in your service; just as a horse is sometimes kept from his owner, and confined to the yard of a farrier, until he recovers the ability of doing his master some service. I only desire to know, do, and suffer the will of God concerning me; and I assure you, my dear brethren, if I saw it to be his will, that I should give up the means of health I have here, I would not tarry another day, but take my chance, and come to my dear charge, were the parish situated ten times more north than it is.

I do not, however, despair of praising God with you in the body; but let us not stay for this to praise him. Let us bless him now; and if any of you are under a cloud of unbelief, and see no matter of praise in being out of hell, in being redeemed by Christ, crowned with thousands of spiritual and temporal mercies, and called to take possession of a kingdom of glory; I beg you would praise him on my account, who raises me so many friends in time, who afflicts me with so gentle a hand, who keeps me from all impatience, and often fills me with consolation in my trouble; giving me a sweet hope, that all things work, and shall work, together for good.

Love one another. The love you show one to another

will greatly refresh my heart. Keep united to our common head,—Jesus. Pray for your infirm minister, as he does for you; and let me hear of your growth in grace, which will be health to the withering bones of,

Your unprofitable servant.

J. F.

P. S. Medicine does not seem to relieve me; but I rejoice that when outward remedies fail, there is one, the blood, and word, and Spirit of Jesus, which never fails;—which removes all spiritual maladies, and will surely give us eternal life. Let me recommend that remedy to you all: you all want it, and, blessed be God, I can say, *Probatum est*,—"tried."

VI.—TO THE SAME.

NEWINGTON, Dec. 28, 1776.

MY DEAR PARISHIONERS,—I hoped to have spent the Christmas holidays with you, and to have ministered to you in holy things; but the weakness of my body confining me here, I humbly submit to the divine dispensation, and ease the trouble of my absence, by being present with you in spirit, and by reflecting on the pleasure I have felt, in years past, while singing with you, "Unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given," &c. This truth is as true now as it was then, and as worthy to be thankfully received at Newington as at Madeley. Let us then receive it with readiness, and it will unite us; we shall meet in Christ, the centre of lasting union, the source of true life, the spring of pure righteousness and joy; and our hearts shall be full of the song of angels, "Glory be to God on high! Peace on earth! Good-will toward each other, and all mankind!"

In order to this, may the eye of your understanding be

more and more opened, to see your need of a Redeemer; and to behold the suitableness, freeness, and fulness of the redemption which was wrought out by the Son of God, and which is applied by the Spirit through faith. The wish which glows in my soul is so ardent and powerful, that it brings me down on my knees while I write, and in that supplicating posture, I entreat you all to consider and improve the day of your visitation, and to prepare in good earnest to meet, with joy, your God and your unworthy pastor in another world. Weak as I was when I left Madeley, I hear that several, who were then young, healthy, and strong, have got the start of me; and that some have been hurried into eternity, without being indulged with a moment's warning. May the awful accident strike a deeper consideration into all our souls! May the sound of their bodies, dashed to pieces at the bottom of a pit, rouse us to a speedy conversion, that we may never fall into the bottomless pit, and that iniquity and delays may not be our eternal ruin! Tottering as I stand on the brink of the grave, some of you, who seem far from it, may drop into it before me; for what has happened may happen again.

Let us all then awake out of sleep: and let us all prepare for our approaching change, and give ourselves no rest, till we have got gospel ground to hope that our great change will be a happy one. In order to this, I beseech you, by all the ministerial and providential calls you have had for these seventeen years, harden not your hearts. Let the hundreds I have buried, lead us all to repentance. Dismiss your sins, and embrace Jesus Christ, who wept for you in the manger, bled for you in Gethsemane, hanged for you on the cross, and now pleads for you on his mediatorial throne. By all that is near and dear to you, as men and as Christians, meet me not on the great day in your sins and in your blood, enemies to Christ by unbelief, and

to God by wicked works. Meet me in the garment of repentance, in the robe of Christ's merits, and in the white linen (the purity of heart and life) which is the holiness of the godly ;—that "holiness, without which no man shall see God." Let the time past suffice in which some of you have lived in sin. By repentance put off the old man and his works ; by faith put on the Lord Jesus and his righteousness. Let all wickedness be gone, for ever gone, with the old year ; and with the new one begin a new life—a life of renewed devotion to God, and of increasing love to our neighbour.

The sum of all I have preached to you, is contained in four propositions : First. Heartily repent of your sins, original and actual. Secondly. Believe the gospel of Christ in sincerity and truth. Thirdly. In the power which true faith gives, (for all things commanded are possible to him that believeth,) run with humble faith the way of God's commandments before God and men. Fourthly. By continuing to take up your cross, and to receive the pure milk of God's word, grow in grace and in the knowledge of Jesus Christ. So shall you grow in peace and joy all the days of your life ; and when rolling years shall be lost in eternity, you will for ever grow in bliss and heavenly glory. O what bliss ! what glory ! The Lord shall be our sun and our crown ; and we shall be jewels in each other's crown,—I in yours and you in mine. For ever we shall be with the Lord and with one another. We shall all live in God's heavenly church, the heaven of heavens. All our days will be a Sabbath, and our Sabbath eternity. No bar of business nor sickness, no distance of time nor place, no gulf of death and the grave, shall part us more. We shall meet in the bosom of Abraham, who met Christ in the bosom of divine love. O what a meeting ! And shall some of us meet there this very year, which we are just entering upon ? What a year ! O ! that blessed year ! If we are of the number of

those who die in the Lord, our souls shall burst the womb of this corruptible flesh ; we shall be born into the other world ; we shall behold the Sun of righteousness without a cloud, and forever bask in the beams of his glory. Is not this prospect glorious enough to make us bid defiance to sin and the grave ; and to join the cry of the Spirit and the Bride, "Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly," though it should be in the black chariot of death ?

Should God bid me to stay on earth a little longer, to serve you in the gospel of his Son ; should he renew my strength (for no work is impossible with him) to do among you the work of a pastor, I hope I shall, by God's grace, prove a more humble, zealous, and diligent minister than I have hitherto been. Some of you have supposed that I made more ado about eternity and your precious souls than they were worth ; but how great was your mistake ! Alas ! it is my grief and shame that I have not been, both in public and private, a thousand times more earnest and importunate with you about your spiritual concerns. Pardon me, my dear friends, pardon me my ignorances and negligences in this respect. And as I most humbly ask your forgiveness, so I most heartily forgive any of you, who may at any time have made no account of my little labours. I only entreat such now to evidence a better mind, by paying a double attention to the loud warnings of Providence, and to the pathetic discourses of the faithful minister who now supplies my place. And may God, for Christ's sake, forgive us all, as we forgive one another !

The more nearly I consider death and the grave, judgment and eternity, the more, blessed be God, I feel that I have preached to you the truth, and that the truth is solid as the Rock of Ages. Glory be to his divine grace, I can say, in some degree, "Here is firm footing." Follow me, and the sorrows of death, instead of encompassing you around, will keep at an awful distance ; and with David, we

shall follow our great Shepherd, even through the dreary valley, without fearing or feeling any evil.

Although I hope to see much more of the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living than I do see; yet, blessed be the divine mercy, I see enough to keep my mind at all times unruffled, and to make me willing calmly to resign my soul into the hands of my faithful Creator, my loving Redeemer, and my sanctifying Comforter, this moment, or the next, if he call for it. I desire your public thanks for all the favours he sheweth me continually, with respect to both my soul and body. Help me to be thankful; for it is a pleasant thing to be thankful. May our thankfulness crown the new year, as God's patience and goodness have crowned all our life. Permit me to bespeak an interest in your prayers also. Ask that my faith may be willing to receive all that God's grace is willing to bestow. Ask that I may meekly suffer, and zealously do all the will of God, in my present circumstances; and that, living or dying, I may say, with the witness of God's Spirit, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain."

If God calls me soon from earth, I beg he may, in his good providence, appoint a more faithful shepherd over you. You need not fear that he will not: you see, that for these many months, you have not only had no famine of the word, but the richest plenty; and what God has done for months, he can do for years; yea, for all the years of your life. Only pray; "ask, and you shall receive." Meet at the throne of grace, and you shall meet at the throne of glory,

Your affectionate, obliged, and unworthy minister.

J. F.

VII.—TO MR. WILLIAM WASE.

NEWINGTON, *Jan. 13, 1777.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I am two kind letters in your debt. I would have answered them before, but venturing to ride out in the frost, the air was too sharp for my weak lungs, and opened my wound, which has thrown me back again.

I am glad to see, by your last, that you take up your shield again. You will never prove a gainer by vilely casting it away. Voluntary humility, despondency, or even a defeat, should not make you give up your confidence; but rather make you hug your shield, and embrace your Saviour with redoubled ardour and courage. “To whom should you go but to him, who hath the words of everlasting life?” And if you give up your faith, do you not block up the way by which you should return to him? Let it be the last time you compliment the enemy with what you should fight for, to the last drop of your blood.

You must not be above being employed in a little way. The great Mr. Grimshaw was not above walking some miles, to preach to seven or eight people; and what are we compared to him? Our neighbourhood will want you more when Mr. Greaves and I are gone. In the mean time, grow in meek, humble, patient, resigned love; and your temper, person, and labours will be more acceptable to all around you. I have many things to say to you about your soul; but you will find the substance of them in two sermons of Mr. Wesley’s, the one entitled, “The Devices of Satan;” and the other, “The Repentance of Believers.” I wish you would read one of them every day, till you have reaped all the benefit that can be got from them: nor eat your morsel alone, but let all be benefited by the contents.

I am, &c.,

J. F.

VIII.—TO THE SAME.

NEWINGTON, *Feb. 18, 1777.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,—My dear friend Mr. Ireland brought me last week Sir John Elliot, who is esteemed the greatest physician in London, in consumptive cases. He gave hopes of my recovery upon using proper diet and means. I was bled yesterday for the third time; and my old doctor thinks, by gentle evacuations and spring herbs, to mend my juices. Be that as it may, I calmly leave all to God, and use the means without trusting in them. I am perfectly taken care of by my kind friends, whom I recommend to your prayers, as well as myself.

With respect to my soul, I calmly wait, in unshaken resolution, for the full salvation of my God; ready to trust him, and to venture on his faithful love, and on the sure mercies of David, either at midnight, noonday, or cock-crowing: for my times are in his hand, and his time is best, and is my time. Death has lost his sting; and, I thank God, I know not what hurry of spirit is, or unbelieving fears, under my most terrifying symptoms. Glory be to God, in Christ, for this unspeakable mercy! Help me to praise him for it.

You talk of my “last trials.” I can hardly guess what you mean, unless Mr. —— should have mistaken tears of holy shame before God, and of humble love to my opponents, for great trials; but they only indicated such a trial, as I pray God to make me live and die in; I mean a deep sense of my unworthiness, and of what I have so often prayed for, in these words—

“I would be by myself abhorr’d,
All glory be to Christ my Lord.”

I thank you, however, for the comfort you administer to me, upon, I suppose, Mr. ——’s mistake.

With respect to our intended room, I beg Mr. Palmer, Mr. Lloyd, and yourself, to consult about it, and that Mr. Palmer would contract for the whole. For my own part, I shall contribute £100, including £10 I have had for it from Mr. Ireland, and £10 from Mr. Thornton. Give my kindest love to all friends and neighbours. I would mention all their dear names, but am strictly forbidden a longer epistle. Farewell in Jesus.

Yours,

J. F.

P. S. If the room cannot be completed for what I have mentioned, and £20 more be wanting, ask Mr. Lloyd how much the royalty might come to, and tell him I would appropriate it to the building.

J. F.

IX.—TO MR. MICHAEL ONIONS.

BATH, *July 8, 1777.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I heartily thank you for your kind letter: and, by you, desire to give my best thanks to the dear companions in tribulation whom you meet, and who so kindly remember so worthless and unprofitable a minister as I. May the God of all grace and love, our common Father, and our all, bless you all, and all our brethren, with all blessings spiritual, and with such temporal favours as will best serve the end of your growth in grace!

My desire is, if I should be spared to minister to you again, to do it with more humility, zeal, diligence, and love; and to make more of you all than I have done. But, as matters are, you must take the will for the deed. Let us all praise God for what is past, and trust him for what is to come. The Lord enable you to cleave together in Christ, and in him to abide in one mind, striving together for the hope of the gospel, the fulness of the Spirit, and that kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost, of which we have so often discoursed together, but into

which we have not pressed with sufficient ardour and violence. God give us the humble, violent faith, which inherits the promise of the Father, that we may triumph in Christ, and adorn his gospel in life and death.

I hope to see you before the summer is ended, if it please God to spare me, and give me strength for the journey. I am, in some respects, better than when I came here, and was enabled to bury a corpse last Sunday, to oblige the minister of the parish; but whether it was that little exertion of voice, or something else, bad symptoms have returned since. Be that as it may, all is well; for He that does all things well, rules and overrules all. I have stood the heats we have had these two days, better than I expected. I desire you will help me to bless the Author of all good, for this and every other blessing of this life; but, above all, for the lively hopes of the next, and for Christ our common hope, peace, joy, wisdom, righteousness, salvation, and all. In him I meet, love, and embrace you. God bless you all, and crown you with loving kindness and tender mercy all the day long! I live if you stand. Do not let me want the reviving cordial of hearing that you stand together firm in the faith, broken in humility, and rejoicing in the living hope of the glory of God. Look much at Jesus. Bless God much for the gift of his only begotten Son. Be much in private prayer. Forsake not the assembling yourselves together in little companies, as well as in public. Walk in the sight of death and eternity; and ever pray for

Your affectionate, but unworthy minister,

J. F.

X.—TO THE PARISHIONERS OF MADELEY.

NEWINGTON, *Jan. 13, 1777.*

MY DEAR COMPANIONS IN TRIBULATION,—All the children of God I love: my delight is in them that excel in strength,

and my tenderest compassions move toward those that exceed in weakness. But of all the children of God, none have so great a right to my peculiar love as you. Your stated or occasional attendance on my poor ministry, and the countless thousands of steps you have taken to hear the word of our common Lord from my despised pulpit, as well as the bonds of neighbourhood, and the many happy hours I have spent before the throne of grace with you, endear you peculiarly to me.

With tears of grateful joy, I recollect the awful moments, when we have, in the strength of our dear Redeemer, bound ourselves to stand to our baptismal vow : to renounce all sin, to believe all the articles of the Christian faith, and to keep God's commandments to the end of our life ; especially the new commandment which enjoins us to love one another, as Christ has loved us. O ! my dear brethren, let this repeated vow, so reasonable, so just, and so comfortable, appear to us worthy of our greatest regard. For my own part, asking pardon of God, and you all, for not having exulted more in the privilege of keeping that vow every day better, and of loving you every hour more tenderly, I am not at all discouraged ; but determine with new courage and delight to love my neighbour as myself ; and to love our covenant God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, with all my mind, heart, and strength ; with all the powers of my understanding, will, and affections. This resolution is bold, but it is evangelical ; being equally founded on the precept and promise of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose cleansing blood can atone for all our past unfaithfulness, and whose almighty Spirit can enable us to perform all gospel obedience for the time to come.

I find much comfort, in my weak state of health, from my relation to my covenant God ; and by my relation to him as my covenant God, I mean, 1. My clear, explicit knowledge of the Father as my Creator and Father ; who

“so loved the world,” you and me, as to give “his only begotten Son, that we should not perish, but have everlasting life.” O! my dear friends, what sweet exclamations, what endearing calling of “Abba, Father,” will ascend from our grateful hearts, if we say, with St. Paul, “He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how freely will he give us all things,” with that capital gift!

2. I mean by my covenant relation, my relation to the adorable Person, who, with the strength of his Godhead, and the strength of his pure manhood, took away my sin, and reconciled our fallen race to the divine nature, making us capable of recovering the divine union from which Adam fell. O how does my soul exult in that dear Mediator! How do I hide my poor soul under the shadow of his wings! There let me meet you all. Driven to that true mercy-seat by the same danger, drawn by the same preserving and redeeming love; invited by the same gospel promises, and encouraged by each other’s example, and by the example of that cloud of witnesses, who have passed into the kingdom of God by that precious door, let us by Christ return to God; let us in Christ find our reconciled God; and may that dear commandment of his, “Abide in me,” prove every day more precious to our souls. If we abide in him, by believing that he is our way, our truth, and our life; by apprehending him as our Prophet or wisdom, our Priest or righteousness, our King or sanctification and redemption, we shall bear fruit, and understand what is meant by these Scriptures, “In him I am well pleased;” “Accepted in the beloved;” “There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus;” “God was in Christ, reconciling the world unto himself,” &c. O the comfort of thus cleaving to Christ by faith; of thus finding that Christ is our all! In that centre of life let us all meet, and death itself will not separate us; for Christ, our life, is the

resurrection; and Christ, our common resurrection, will bring us back from the grave, to worship him altogether, where absence and sickness shall interrupt and separate us no more.

I sometimes feel a desire of being buried where you are buried, and having my bones lie in a common earth-bed with yours; but I soon resign that wish; and leaving that particular to Providence, I exult in thinking, that whatever distance there may be between our graves, we can now bury our sins, cares, doubts, and fears, in the one grave of our divine Saviour; and that we rejoice each of us in our measure, that neither life nor death, neither things present nor things to come, shall ever be able (while we hang on the Crucified, as he hung on the cross) to separate us from Christ our Head, nor from the love of each other, his members.

Love, then, one another, my dear brethren, I entreat you; by the pledges of redeeming love, which I have so often given you, while I said, in his name, "The body of Christ which was given for thee; the blood of Christ which was shed for thee," to reconcile thee to God, and cement thee to the brethren; by these pledges of divine love, I entreat you love one another. If I, your poor unworthy shepherd, am smitten, be not scattered; but rather be more closely gathered unto Christ, and keep near each other in faith and love, till you all receive our second Comforter and Advocate in the glory of his fulness. You know I mean the Holy Spirit, the third person in our covenant God; "He is with you;" but, if you plead "the promise of the Father, which," says Christ, "you have heard of me, he will be in you." He will fill your souls with his light, love, and glory, according to that verse which we have so often sung together,—

"Refining fire, go through my heart,
Illuminate my soul;

Scatter thy life through every part,
And sanctify the whole."

This indwelling of the Comforter perfects the mystery of sanctification in the believer's soul. This is the highest blessing of the Christian covenant on earth. Rejoicing in God our Creator, in God our Redeemer, let us look for the full comfort of God our Sanctifier. So shall we live and die in the faith, going on from faith to faith, from strength to strength, from comfort to comfort, till Christ is all in all to us all.

My paper fails, but not my love. It embraces you all in the bowels of Jesus Christ; to whose love I earnestly recommend you, earnestly desiring you would recommend to his faithful mercy,

Your affectionate friend and brother, your unworthy pastor and fellow-helper in the faith,

J. F.

P. S. I earnestly recommend to you all my dear brother Greaves. Show him all the love you have shown to me, and, if possible, show him more, who is so much more deserving.

XI.—TO MR. THOMAS YORK AND DANIEL EDMUNDS.

BRISTOL, *November —, 1777.*

MY DEAR FRIENDS,—I have received Mr. York's kind letter, and am encouraged, by the spirit of love and kindness which it breathes, as well as by your former offer of helping me off with my burdens, to beg you would settle temporal affairs for me.

The debt of gratitude I owe to a dying sister, who once took a very long journey to see me, when I was ill in Germany, and whom I just stopped from coming, last winter, to Newington to nurse me; the unanimous advice of the physicians whom I have consulted, and the opportunity of

travelling with serious friends, have at last determined me to remove to a warmer climate. As it is doubtful, very doubtful, whether I shall be able to stand the journey; and, if I do, whether I shall be able to come back to England; and, if I come back, whether I shall be able to serve my church; it is right to make what provision I can to have it properly served while I live, and to secure some spiritual assistance to my serious parishioners when I shall be no more. I have attempted to build a house in Madeley Wood, about the centre of the parish, where I should be glad the children might be taught to read and write in the day, and the grown-up people might hear the word of God in the evening, when they can get an evangelist to preach it to them; and where the serious people might assemble for social worship when they have no teacher.

This has involved me in some difficulties about discharging the expense of that building, and paying for the ground it stands upon; especially when ill health has put me on the additional expense of an assistant. If I had strength, I would serve my church alone, board as cheap as I could, and save what I could from the produce of the living, to clear the debt, and leave that little token of my love free from encumbrances to my parishioners. But as Providence orders things otherwise, I have another object, which is to secure a faithful minister to serve the church while I live. Providence has sent me dear Mr. Greaves, who loves the people, and is loved by them. I should be glad to make him comfortable; and as all the care of the flock, by my illness, devolves upon him, I would not hesitate for a moment to let him have all the profit of the living, if it were not for the debt contracted about the room. My difficulty lies, then, between what I owe to my fellow-labourer, and what I owe to my parishioners, whom I should be sorry to have burdened with a debt contracted for the room.

My agreement with Mr. Greaves was to allow him forty

guineas a year, out of which I was to deduct twelve for his board; but as I cannot board him while I go abroad, I design to allow him, during my absence, £50 a year, together with the use of my house, furniture, garden, and my horse, if he chooses to keep one, reserving the use of a room, and stall in the stable, to entertain the preachers who help us in their round; not doubting but that the serious people will gladly find them and their horses proper necessities. But I know so little what my income may come to, that I am not sure whether it will yield Mr. Greaves £50, after paying all the expenses of the living. Now, I beg that you will consult together, and see whether the vicar's income, that is, tithes, &c. &c., will discharge all the expenses of the living, and leave a residue sufficient to pay a stipend of £50. I except the royalty, which I have appropriated to the expense of the room. If it be, well; if there be any surplus, let it be applied to the room; if there be anything short, then Mr. Greaves may have the whole, and take his chance in that respect, as it will only be taking the vicar's chance; for I doubt, if sometimes, after necessary charges defrayed, the vicars have a clear £50.

I beg you will let me know how the balance of my account stands, that, some way or other, I may order it to be paid immediately; for if the balance is against me, I could not leave England comfortably without having settled the payment. A letter will settle this business, as well as if twenty friends were at the trouble of taking a journey; and talking is far worse for me than reading or writing. I do not say this to put a slight upon my dear friends. I should rejoice to see them, if it were to answer any other end than that of putting on a plaster to tear it off as soon as it sticks.

Ten thousand pardons of my dear friends, for troubling them with this scrawl about worldly matters. May God

help us all so to settle our eternal concerns, that when we shall be called to go to our long home and heavenly country, we may be ready, and have our acquaintance along with us. I am quite tired with writing: nevertheless, I cannot lay by my pen without desiring my best Christian love to all my dear companions in tribulation, and neighbours in Shropshire; especially to Mrs. York, Miss Simpson, Mrs. Harper, Mr. Scott, when Mr. York sees him, Winny Edmunds, and all inquiring friends. Thank Molly for her good management; and tell her I recommend her to our common heavenly Master; and that if she wants to go to London, or come to Bristol, I shall give her such a character as will help her to some good place, by the directions of a kind Providence. I heartily thank Daniel, both as churchwarden and as receiver and house-steward; and I beg Mr. York again to pay him a proper salary.

I am, in the best of bonds, your affectionate neighbour, friend, and minister,

J. F.

XII.—TO MR. JEHU.

BRISTOL, *Nov. —, 1777.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I thank you for all your care and love. Beware of an ensnaring world. You may keep the few things I lent you, as long as you stay at Madeley: when you remove, please to give them, or the amount, to some of our poor brethren. Farewell in Jesus. Life and death are both of them a blessing. I rejoice in the will of God every way; and set to my seal that he is good, faithful, and gracious to the chief of sinners, and least of all believers, even to your affectionate friend,

J. F.

XIII.—TO MR. WILLIAM WASE.

BRISTOL, *Nov.* —, 1777.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Pardon the trouble I have given you in my temporal concerns: it is more for the poor, and the Lord, than for me. O, my dear friend, let us go through the things temporal, so as not to lose the things eternal. Let us honour God's truth, by believing his word; Christ's blood, by hoping firmly in divine mercy; and all the divine perfections, by loving God with all our hearts, and one another, as Christ loved us. My kind love to all the brethren on both sides the water.

Go from me to Mrs. Cound; tell her, I charge her, in the name of God, to give up the world, to set out with all speed for heaven, and to join the few that fear God about her. If she refuses, call again; call weekly, if not daily, and warn her for me till she is ripe for glory. Tell the brethren at Broseley, that I did my body an injury the last time I preached to them on the green: but I do not repine at it, if they took the warning, and have ceased to be neither hot nor cold, and begin to be warm in zeal, love, prayer, and every grace. Give my love to George Cranage; tell him to make haste to Christ, and not to doze away his last days.

The physician has not yet given me up; but, I bless God, I do not wait for his farewell to give myself up to my God and Saviour. I write by stealth, as my friends here would have me forbear doing it, and even talking; but I will never part with my privilege of writing and shouting, "Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory over sin, death, and the grave, through Jesus Christ!" To him be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Tell Mr. York I embrace him in spirit, and shall, if it please God, find an opportunity to fulfil his kind request

by Miss Simpson, whom, together with my dear friend and good nurse, Mrs. Harper, I salute in the Lord. God bless you and yours.

I am yours in the love of Jesus, the best of bonds,

J. F.

XIV.—TO THE BRETHREN WHO HEAR THE WORD
OF GOD IN THE PARISH CHURCH OF MADELEY.

BRISTOL, *Nov.* 26, 1777.

MY DEAR BRETHREN,—I thank you for the declaration of your affectionate remembrance, which you have sent me by John Owen, the messenger of your brotherly love. As a variety of reasons, with which I shall not trouble you, prevent my coming to take my leave of you in person, permit me to do it by letter. The hopes of recovering a little strength to come and serve you again in the gospel, make me take the advice of the physicians, who say, that removing to a drier air and warmer climate might be of great service to my health. I kiss the rod which smites me. I adore the providence which lays me aside; and beg that by this long correction of my heavenly Father, I may be so pruned as to bring forth more fruit, if I am spared.

I am more and more persuaded that I have not declared unto you cunningly devised fables; and that the gospel I have had the honour of preaching, though feebly, among you, is the power of God to salvation, to every one who believes it with the heart. God grant that we may all be of that happy number! Want of time does not permit me to give you more directions; but if you follow those which fill the rest of this page, they may supply the want of a thousand. Have, every day, lower thoughts of yourselves, higher thoughts of Christ; kinder thoughts of your brethren, and more hopeful thoughts of all around you.

Love to assemble in the great congregation, and with your companions in tribulation ; but, above all, love to pray to your Father in secret ; to consider your Saviour, who says, "Look unto me and be saved ;" and to listen for your Sanctifier and Comforter, who whispers that "he stands at the door, and knocks, to enter into your inmost souls, and to set up his kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy, with divine power in your willing breasts." Wait all the day long for his glorious appearing within you ; and, when you are together, by suitable prayers, proper hymns, and enlivening exhortations, keep up your earnest expectations of his pardoning and sanctifying love. Let not a drop satisfy you ; desire an ocean, at least a fountain springing up to your comfort in your own souls, and flowing toward all around you in streams of love and delightful instructions, to the consolation of those with whom you converse, especially your brethren, and those of your own households. Do not eat your morsel by yourselves, like selfish, niggardly people ; but whether you eat the meat that perisheth, or that which endureth unto everlasting life, be ready to share it with all. "Cast your bread upon the waters," in a temporal and spiritual sense, and it will not be lost. God will bless your seed sown, and it will abundantly increase. Let every one with whom you converse be the better for your conversation. Be burning and shining lights wherever you are. Set the fire of divine love to the hellish stubble of sin. Be valiant for the truth. Be champions for love. Be sons of thunder against sin, and sons of consolation toward humble sinners. Be faithful to your God, your king, and your masters. Let not the good ways of God be blasphemed through any of you. Let your heavenly mindedness and your brotherly kindness be known to all men ; so that all who see you may wonder, and say, "See how these people love one another !"

You have need of patience, as well as of faith and power.

You must learn to suffer as well as to do the will of God. Do not, then, think it strange to pass through fiery trials: they are excellent for the proving, purifying, and strengthening of your faith. Only let your faith be firm in a tempest. Let your hope in Christ be as a sure "anchor cast within the veil," and your patient love will soon outride the storm, and make you find there is a peace in Christ and in the Holy Spirit which no man can give or take away. May that peace be abundantly given to you from our common Father, our common Redeemer, and our common Sanctifier, our covenant God, the gracious God of Christians, whom we have so often vouched to be our God and our all, when we have been assembled together in his name. He is the same merciful and faithful God "yesterday, to-day, and for ever." Believe in his threefold name. Rejoice in every degree of his great salvation. Triumph in hope of the glory which shall be revealed. Do not forget to be thankful for a cup of water; much less for being out of hell, for the means of grace, the forgiveness of sins, the blood of Jesus, the communion of saints on earth, and the future glorification of saints in heaven. Strongly, heartily believe every gospel truth, especially the latter part of the Apostles' Creed. Believe it, I say, till your faith becomes to you the substance of the eternal life you hope for; and then, come life, come death, either or both will be welcome to you, as, through grace, I find they are to me.

I leave this blessed island for awhile; but I trust I shall never leave the kingdom of God, the mount Sion, the new Jerusalem, the shadow of Christ's cross, the clefts of the rock smitten and pierced for us. There I entreat you to meet me. There I meet you in spirit. From thence, I trust, I shall joyfully leap into the ocean of eternity, to go and join those ministering spirits who wait on the heirs of salvation: and if I am no more permitted to minister to you in the land of the living, I rejoice at the thought, that I shall,

perhaps, be allowed to accompany the angels, who, if you continue in the faith, will be commissioned to carry your souls into Abraham's bosom. If our bodies do not moulder away in the same grave, our spirits shall be sweetly lost in the same sea of divine and brotherly love. I hope to see you again in the flesh; but my sweetest and firmest hope is to meet you where there are no parting seas, no interposing mountains, no sickness, no death, no fear of loving too much, no shame for loving too little, no apprehension of bursting new vessels in our lungs, by indulging the joy of seeing, or the sorrow of leaving, our brethren.

In the mean time, I earnestly recommend you to the pastoral care of the great Shepherd and Bishop of souls, and to the brotherly care of one another, as well as to the ministerial care of my substitute. The authority of love which you allowed me to exert among you for edification, I return to you, and divide among you, humbly requesting that you would mutually use it in warning the unruly, supporting the weak, and comforting all. Should I be spared to come back, let me have the joy of finding you all of one heart and one soul, continuing steadfast in the apostles' doctrine, in fellowship one with another, and in communion with our sin-pardoning and sin-abhorring God. This you may do, through grace, by strongly believing in the atoning blood and sanctifying Spirit of Christ, our common head and our common life, in whom my soul embraces you, and in whose gracious hands I leave both you and myself. Bear me on your hearts before him in praying love; and be persuaded, that you are thus borne by, my dear brethren,

Yours, &c.,

J. F.

XV.—TO THE SOCIETY AT MADELEY.

DOVER, *Dec. 2, 1777.*

MY DEAR BRETHREN,—By the help of divine Providence, and of your prayers, I have got safe to Dover; and I find that the journey has, so far, been of service to me. I thought to have been in France by this time; but the wind being high, though favourable, the mariners were afraid to leave the safe harbour, lest they should be driven on the French cliffs too fiercely. This delay gives me an opportunity of writing a line to tell you, that I shall bear you on my heart by sea and land; that “the earth is the Lord’s, with all the fulness thereof;” that Jesus lives to pray for us; and that I still recommend myself to your prayers, hoping to hear of your order, steadfastness, and growth of faith toward Christ, and in love toward each other, which will greatly revive your affectionate friend and brother,

J. F.

XVI.—TO THE SOCIETIES IN AND ABOUT MADELEY.

NYON, 1778.

MY DEAR, VERY DEAR BRETHREN,—This comes with my best love to you, and my best wishes that peace, mercy, and truth may be multiplied unto you from God the Father, through Jesus Christ, by the spirit of his love; with which I beg your hearts and mine may be daily more replenished.

I am yet in the land of the living, to prepare, with you, for the land where there is life without death, praising without weariness of the flesh, and loving without separation. There I once more challenge you to meet me, with all the mind that was in Christ; and may not one hoof be left behind! May there not be found one Demas among you, turning aside from the little flock and the narrow way, to love and follow this present perishing world. May there not be one Esau, who, for a frivolous gratification, sold his

birthright; nor another wife of Lot, who looked back for the good things of the city of destruction, and was punished by a judgment almost as fearful as that of Ananias, Sapphira, and Judas.

My dear companions, let us be consistent; let us seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things, upon your diligent, frugal, secondary endeavours, shall be added unto you. Let us live daily more and more upon the free love of our gracious Creator and Preserver, the grace and righteousness of our atoning Redeemer and Mediator; nor let us stop short of the powerful, joyous influence of our Comforter and Sanctifier.

Bear me on your hearts, as I do you on mine; and meet me all in the heart of Christ, who is the centre of our union, and our common head; humbly leaving it to him when and where we shall meet again. In the mean while, I beg you will pay a due regard to the following texts: "Love one another as I have loved you." "By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye love one another." "Little children, love not the world; for if any man love the world, the love of the Father," and of the brethren, "is not in him." "Be of one accord, of one mind." "Let there be no divisions among you." "Mind not high things," but things which make for peace and edification.

Farewell in Christ, till we meet in the flesh around his table, or in the spirit around his throne. My love and thanks to Mr. Murlin and Mr. Roberts.

I am your afflicted, comforted brother,

J. F.

XVII.—TO THE REV. MR. GREAVES.

NON, *July 18, 1778.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I expected to have had an answer to the two last letters I wrote you, but have been disappointed of my hope. Probably your letters have miscarried in

these troublesome times. I trust you lay yourself out in length and breadth for the good of the flock committed to your care. I should be glad to hear that all the flock grow in grace, and that the little flock grow in humble love.

Be pleased to read the following note in the church:—

“John Fletcher begs a further interest in the prayers of the congregation of Madeley; and desires those who assemble to serve God in the church, to help him to return public thanks to almighty God for many mercies received, especially for being able to do every day a little ministerial duty, which he considers as an earnest of the strength he should be glad to have, to come back soon, and serve them in the gospel, which he designs to do, please God, in some months. In the mean time, he humbly beseeches them to serve God as Christians, and to love one another as brethren; neglecting no means of grace, and rejoicing in all the hopes of glory.”

I hope, my dear brother, that you remember my request to you, in my letter from Dover; and that you are glad of every possible help to do the people good. The harvest is great, the labourers are comparatively few. Pray the Lord to send more labourers into his harvest; and rejoice when he sends us any who will help us to break up the fallow ground.

Be pleased, when you have an opportunity, to read the following note to the societies in Madeley, Dawley, and the Banks:—

MY DEAR BRETHREN,—I hope you have no need of a line to assure you of the continuance of my brotherly love for you. We are all called to grow in grace, and consequently in love, which is the greatest of all Christian graces. Your prayers for my soul and my body have not been without answer. Blessed be God! Glory be to his rich mercy in Christ. I live yet the life of faith; and as to my body, I

recover some strength, which rejoices me the more, as I hope a good Providence will make way for my laying it out in inviting you to leave the things which are behind, and to press with earnestness, unity, and patience, toward the mark of our heavenly calling in Christ. God bless you all, with all the blessings brought to the Church by Christ Jesus, and by the other Comforter! Fare ye all well in Jesus, and remember at the throne of grace,

Your affectionate brother and servant in Christ,

J. F.

My love to all our kind neighbours, and to the preachers, whom I beg you will thank in my name. Adieu, my dear brother. I am yours in the Lord,

J. F.

XVIII.—TO MR. THOMAS YORK.

NYON, *Sept.* 15, 1778.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I thank you for your love, and generous care of my little temporal concerns. I long to know how you all do. You may see in the enclosed how I do in body. Blessed be the God of all consolation, though I have still very trying, feverish nights, and nothing but forced evacuations, I am kept in peace of mind; resigned to his will, who afflicts me for my good, and justly sets me aside for my unprofitableness. Well, though I am a bruised vessel, yet I rest on him; he does not break me, yea, he comforts me on every side. His grace within, and his people without, turn my trying circumstances into matter of praise.

Give my love to all your dear family, and to the two or three who may yet remember me at Shiffnall. Also give my love to Daniel; and desire him, when he gathers the Easter dues, to give my love and thanks to all my parishioners. Adieu!

Yours,

J. F.

XIX.—TO MR. WILLIAM WASE.

NYON, *Feb.* 11, 1779.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have just received yours of the 24th of January, and rejoice to hear of the welfare of your friends; but there is no blessing here without some alloy of grief, and such to me was the account of the poor state of dear Mrs. Wase's health. The Lord be with her as a Comforter and Sanctifier, if he does not choose to be with her as a physician. Tell her, I should be glad to hold up her hands in her fight of affliction; but if the poor, unprofitable, weak servant is far off, the Master, who is rich in mercy, who fills the whole world with his goodness and patience, and who has all power given him as our Brother, Son of man, in heaven and earth—this kind Master is near to her, and all his afflicted ones. Bid her from me, entreat her in my name, or rather in his dear name, Jesus, Salvation, Resurrection, Life, Light, and Love, to look to him, and to make a free and constant use of him in all his offices.

I recommend to her two remedies: the one is a cheerful resignation to the will of God, whereby her animal spirits will be raised and sweetly refreshed; the other is, four lumps of heavenly sugar, to be taken every half hour, day and night, when she does not sleep. I make a constant use of them, to my great comfort. They have quickened my soul when I was dying, and I doubt not but they will have the same effect upon hers. Our Church has already extracted that divine sugar from the Scripture, and put it into the Common Prayer-book, as the heavenly bait which is to draw us to the Lord's table. Though they have often passed through my mouth when I have called her there, they have lost nothing of their sweetness and force. "God so loved the world," &c. "If any man sin,"

&c. "It is a faithful saying," &c. "Come unto me, all ye that are weary," &c. God grant her abundance of the faith which rolls these heavenly pills in the mind, and much of that love which sucks their sweetness in the heart. Tell her, they go down best if taken in the cup of thanksgiving; into which a tear of desire, of humility, of repentance, or of joy, might be dropped occasionally. That tear is to be had by simply looking to Him who sells oil to the virgins, who offered a springing well to the woman of Samaria, and opened a fountain flowing with heavenly blood and water, when he hung for us upon the cross. To him be praise and glory forever! Amen.

Tell my little god-daughter, Patty Cartwright, she is big enough and bad enough to take them; and that the holy child Jesus came on purpose into the world to make them up for her. What a shame it is to have such a remedy so near, and not to make more use of it to subdue our unbelief, and cure our stupid ingratitude.

Thank brother Costerdine and his fellow-labourers for their occasional help; and may He who gives the increase abundantly bless it to them and to our friends. May the Lord vouchsafe to consecrate our little Zoar, by calling one sinner, and establishing one saint. How abundantly shall we be repaid for our little expense and trouble!

I am yours, &c.

J. F.

XX.—TO THE BRETHREN IN AND ABOUT MADELEY.

NYON, *Feb.* 11, 1779.

MY DEAR COMPANIONS IN TRIBULATION,—Peace and mercy, faith, hope, and love, be multiplied to you all in general, and to each of you in particular, from the Father of mercies, through the Lord Jesus Christ, by the Spirit of grace. I thank you for your kind remembrance of me in your prayers. I am yet spared to pray for you. O that I had

more power with God ! I would bring down all heaven into all your hearts. Strive together in love for the living faith, the glorious hope, the sanctifying, perfecting love, once delivered to the saints. Look to Jesus. Move on ; run yourselves in the heavenly race, and let each sweetly draw his brother along, till the whole company appears before the redeeming God in Sion, adorned as a bride for the heavenly bridegroom.

I hope God will, in his mercy, spare me to see you in the flesh ; and, if I cannot labour for you, I shall gladly suffer with you. If you will put health into my flesh, marrow in my bones, joy in my heart, and life into my whole frame, be of one heart and of one soul. Count nothing your own but your sin and shame ; and bury that dreadful property in the grave, the bottomless grave of our Saviour. Let all you are and have be his that bought you, and his members, for his sake. Dig hard in the gospel mines for hidden treasure. Blow hard the furnace of prayer with the bellows of faith, until you are melted into love, and the dross of sin is purged out of every heart. "There is a river that maketh glad the city of God ;" it is the grace that flows from his throne. Jesus is the vessel, the heavenly ark : get together into him, and sweetly sail down into the ocean of eternity. So shall ye be true miners, furnacemen, and bargemen. Farewell in Jesus.

J. F.

XXI.—TO THE REV. MR. GREAVES.

NYON, *May 18, 1779.*

MY DEAR FELLOW-LABOURER,—My departure being delayed some weeks gives me much concern, although, from the confidence I have in your pastoral diligence, I am easy about the flock you feed.

There was last week a visitation held here, and the clergy of the town took my part against the visiter and

others, who said, "I was of a sect everywhere spoken against." The conversation about it held so long, and was so trying to my grain of humility, that I went out. The matter, however, ended peaceably, by a vote that they should invite me to dinner. God ever save us from jealous and persecuting zeal.

I hope, my dear friend, you go on comfortably, doing more and more the work of a growing evangelist. Remember my love to all I mentioned in my last, to as many of my parishioners as you meet with, and especially to all our good neighbours, and to the society. God bless you all, and enable you to persevere in prayer for yourself, for the flock, (which I once more recommend to you, with the lambs,—the children,) and for

Your affectionate brother,

J. F.

XXII.—TO MR. MICHAEL ONIONS.

NON, *May 18, 1779.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I have complied with the request of my friends to stay a little longer among them, as it was backed by a small society of pious people gathered here. Three weeks ago, they got about me, and on their knees, with many tears, besought me to stay till they were a little stronger, and able to stand alone; nor would they rise, till they had got me to comply. Happy would it be for us all, if we prayed as earnestly to Him who can give us substantial blessings.

However, yesterday I spoke with a carrier at Geneva, to take me to London, who said he would give us a fortnight's notice. The Lord is always ready to give our hearts a lift to the kingdom of grace, through which we must pass to the kingdom of glory. May we be ready also! The comfort of this journey is, that we all may travel together, though our bodies are asunder; for Christ

the way is everywhere, and faith in his word is, like his word, one and the same, in every age and country. So is holiness, the narrow way; for in all places we may love God with all our heart, and our neighbour as ourselves. I hope you and all your serious friends travel thus, and that your journey is like that of St. Paul, who travelled hard, as one running for a prize, even for a crown of life.

Give my kind love to all who travel in this manner. Invite kindly all who have not yet set out. Stir up earnestly those that loiter, especially Thomas Powis, over whom my heart yearns. Above all, give them the example of leaving the things behind, and pressing toward the mark with renewed vigour. Tell your wife I hold her to her promise of being the Lord's more than ever, because the time is shorter for us both. Tell your mother I expect to find her a bruised reed in herself, and a pillar in Christ Jesus. The Lord bless your brother and his wife, with that child born, that son given, who shall live to restore to us those whom death carries away. I hope Patty Cartwright, with her parents, will be made strong in faith and patience, if not in the body. Tell Mrs. Ford I hope she is better in soul for her bodily weakness. If Mrs. Brooke is yet with her, I hope to find them sisters in Christ more than in Adam. I experience here that kindred in the former is stronger and dearer than in the latter. Tell Mr. Wase, I hope he is a widower in the Lord, devoting himself to the bringing up the Lord's family and his own; both of which require close attendance. My love to your fellow-leaders, and by them to the companies you meet in prayer; also to Mr. Hatton, and the preachers who help in the round. My love also waits on I. Tranter, T. Poole, and T. Banks, and all who meet in their houses. Tell them, I hope to find them growing up into Christ in all things, particularly in heavenly zeal and humble

love. Salute all our dear friends and neighbours for me.
Farewell in the Lord. I am yours in him, J. F.

XXIII.—TO MR. THOMAS YORK.

NYON, *July 18, 1779.*

MY DEAR SIR,—Providence is still gracious to me, and raises me friends on all sides. May God reward them all, and may you have a double reward for all your kindness. I hope I am getting a little strength. The Lord has blessed to me a species of black cherry, which I have eaten in large quantities. As a proof that I am better, I can inform you that I have preached once in this country; but as I was going to venture again, I had a return of spitting blood, so that I desisted. For a fortnight past, I have catechised the children of the town every day, and I do not find much inconvenience from that exercise. Some of them seem to be under sweet drawings of the Father; and a few of their mothers begin to come, and desire me, with tears in their eyes, to stay in this country. They urge much my being born here; and I reply, that as I was “born again” in England, that is, of course, the country which to me is the dearer of the two. My friends have prevailed on me to publish a poem on the praises of God, which I wrote many years ago. The revising it for the press is at once a business and a pleasure, which I go through on horseback. Help me, by your prayers, to ask a blessing on this little attempt; and may the God of all grace, who deserves so much our praises for the unspeakable gift of his dear Son, give us such a spirit of thankful praise, that we may bless and praise him as David did formerly.

Remember me in brotherly love to all your family, and to all friends about you, especially to those who fear God and love the gospel. Let us grow in humble love, which becomes those who believe themselves redeemed by the

blood of the Son of God, to be a "peculiar people, zealous of" kind offices, and all manner of "good works."

I wish I could procure you an estate in this fine country, as I hope to do Mr. Perronet, one of the physicians who showed me so much love when I lay sick at Paddington. His grandfather was a Swiss, who was naturalized in the reign of Queen Anne. By calling upon some of his relations, I have found that he is entitled to an estate of some thousand pounds, of which he is coming to take possession. So Providence prepares for me a friend, a kind physician, and a fellow-traveller to accompany me back to England; where one of my chief pleasures will be to embrace you, if God spare us to meet again, and to assure you how much

I am, my dear friend, your obliged servant,

J. F.

XXIV.—TO THE REV. MR. GREAVES.

NYON, *December 25, 1779.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Glory be to God for his unspeakable gift! May that Jesus—that eternal, all-creating, all-supporting, all-atoning, all-comforting Word, which was with God, and is God, and came in the likeness of sinful flesh to dwell among men, and to be our Emmanuel, God with us—may he by a lively faith be formed in our hearts; and by a warm love lie and grow in the manger of our emptiness, filling it always with the bread that comes down from heaven. Though absent in body, I am with you and the flock in spirit. You are now at the Lord's table. O! may all the dear souls you have just now preached to, receive Jesus Christ in the pledge of his dying love, and go home with this lively conviction: "God has given me eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life: I have the Son, I have life, even eternal life. The way, the truth, the life, and happiness are mine; and now return unto thy rest, O my soul." "Lord, let

thy servant depart in peace; for mine eyes," the eyes of my faith, "have seen," the hand of my faith hath handled, the mouth of my faith hath tasted, "thy salvation;" a salvation present, unspeakable, and eternal.

Glory be to God in heaven! Peace on earth! Love and good-will everywhere, but especially in the spot where Providence has called us to cry, "Behold what manner of love the Father hath testified to us, in Jesus, that we, children of wrath, should be made children of God," by that only-begotten Son of the Most High, who was born for our regeneration, crucified for our atonement, raised for our justification, and now triumphs in heaven for our sanctification, for our full redemption, and for our eternal glorification. To him be glory for ever and ever; and may all who fear and love him about you say for ever, Amen, hallelujah!

Out of the fulness of my heart I invite them to do so; but how shallow is my fulness to his! What a drop to an ocean without bottom or shore! Let us, then, receive continually from Him, who is the overflowing and ever-present source of pardoning, sanctifying, and exhilarating grace; and from the foot of the Wrekin, where you are, to the foot of the Alps, where I am, let us echo back to each other the joyful, thankful cry of the primitive Christians, which was the text here this morning, "Out of his fulness we have all received grace for grace."

I long to hear from you and the flock. How do you go on? Answer this and my last together, and let me know that you cast joyfully all your burdens on the Lord. Mr. Ireland sends me word, Mr. Romaine told him you were not very well. Take care of yourself. Lay nothing to heart. Should your breast be weak, preach but once on Sunday; for you know the evening sermon is not a part of our stated duty. I say this that you may not over-do, and lie by, as I do. God direct, sustain, and comfort you, in all things!

Our lord-lieutenant, being stirred up by some of the clergy, and believing firmly that I am banished from England, has taken the alarm still more, and forbidden the ministers to let me exhort in their houses, threatening them with the power of the senate if they did. They all yielded, but are now ashamed of it. A young clergyman, a true Timothy, has opened me his house, where I exhort twice a week; and the other clergymen, encouraged by his boldness, come to our meetings.

Give my kind pastoral love to all my flock in general, and to all who fear God, and love Jesus and the brethren, in particular. May all see and feel more abundantly the salvation of God! May national distress be sanctified unto them; and may they all be loyal subjects of the King of kings, and of his anointed, our king. May the approaching new year be to them a year of peace and gospel grace. Remember me kindly to all our neighbours whom I mentioned by name in my preceding letters. I hope Molly takes good care of you. God bless her!

That you and the flock may fare well in Jesus, is the hearty prayer of yours,

J. F.

XXV.—TO THE SAME.

NYON, *March 7, 1780.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I long to hear from you. I hope you are well, and grow in the love of Christ, and of the souls bought with his blood, and committed to your care. May you have the comfort of bringing them all into the pastures of the gospel, and seeing them thrive under your pastoral care. I recommend to your care the most helpless of the flock—I mean the children and the sick: they most want your help, and they are the most likely to benefit by it; for affliction softens the heart, and children are not yet quite hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

I beg you will not fail, when you have opportunity, to recommend to our flock to honour the king, to study to be quiet, and to hold up, as much as lies in us, the hands of the government by which we are protected. Remember me kindly to Mr. Gilpin, and to all our parishioners. God give you peace by all means, as in his mercy he does to

Your affectionate friend and fellow-labourer,

J. F.

XXVI.—TO MR. WILLIAM WASE.

NYON, *March 7, 1780.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I am sorry the building has come to so much more than I intended ; but as the mischief is done, it is a matter to exercise patience, resignation, and self-denial ; and it will be a caution in future. I am going to sell part of my little estate here to discharge the debt. I had laid by £50 to print a small work, which I wanted to distribute here ; but, as I must be just before I presume to offer that mite to the God of truth, I lay by the design, and shall send that sum to Mr. York. Money is so scarce here at this time, that I shall sell at a very great loss ; but necessity and justice are two great laws which must be obeyed. As I design on my return to England to pinch until I have got rid of this debt, I may go and live in one of the cottages belonging to the vicar, if we could let the vicarage for a few pounds ; and in that case, I dare say, Mr. Greaves would be so good as to take the other little house.

My dear friend, let us die to sin ; hold fast Jesus, the way, the truth, and the life ; walk by faith in him, and not by the sight and passions of the old Adam. I hope the sun of affliction, which burns poor England and us, will ripen us all for glory. Give my best love to all our friends in Christ, and tell them, that the hope of seeing them does me good, and that I trust they will not turn it

into bitterness; which would be the case, if I should find them out of the narrow way, and out of the kingdom of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Lord. Salute dear John York; hold up his hands for me, and bid him stand fast in the Lord, leaning upon the cross of Him who bruised the serpent's head, and overcame death, hell, and the grave, by pulling out sin, the sting of death.

Farewell in Jesus Christ,

J. F.

XXVII.—TO THE REV. MR. GREAVES.

NYON, *Sept.* 15, 1780.

MY DEAR FELLOW-LABOURER,—I had fixed the time for my departure for this month; but now two hindrances stand in my way. When I came to collect the parts of my manuscript, I found the most considerable part wanting; and after a thousand searches, I was obliged to write it over again. This accident obliged me to put off my journey; and now the change of weather has brought back some symptoms of my disorder. I speak, or rather whisper, with difficulty; but I hope the quantity of grapes I begin to eat will have as good an effect upon me as in the two last autumns. Have patience, then, a little while. If things are not as you could wish, you can but do as I have done for many years,—“learn patience by the things which you suffer.” Crossing our will, getting the better of our own inclinations, and growing in experience, are no mean advantages; and they may all be yours. Mr. Ireland writes me word, that if I return to England now, the winter will undo all I have been doing for my health for many years. However, I have not quite laid by the design of spending the winter with you; but do not expect me till you see me. I am, nevertheless, firmly purposed, that if I do not set out this autumn, I shall do so next spring as early as I can.

Till I had this relapse, I was able, thank God, to exhort in a private room three times a week; but the lord-lieutenant will not allow me to get into a pulpit, though they permit the school-masters, who are laymen, to put on a band and read the church prayers; so high runs the prejudice. The clergy, however, tell me, that if I will renounce my ordination, and get Presbyterian orders among them, they will allow me to preach; and on these terms one of the ministers of this town offers me his curacy. A young clergyman of Geneva, tutor to my nephew, appears to me a truly converted man; and he is so pleased when I tell him there are converted souls in England, that he will go over with me to learn English, and converse with the British Christians. He wrote last summer with such force to some of the clergy, who were stirring up the fire of persecution, that he made them ashamed; and we have since had peace from that quarter.

There is little genuine piety in these parts: nevertheless, there is yet some of the form of it; so far as to go to the Lord's table regularly four times a year. There meet the adulterers, the drunkards, the swearers, the infidels, and even the materialists. They have no idea of the double damnation that awaits hypocrites. They look upon partaking that sacrament as a ceremony enjoined by the magistrate. At Zurich, the first town in this country, they have lately beheaded a clergyman, who wanted to betray his country to the emperor, to whom it chiefly belonged. It is the town of the great reformer Zuinglius; yet there they poisoned the sacramental wine a few years ago. Tell it not in Gath! I mention this to show you there is occasion and great need to bear a testimony against the faults of the clergy here; and if I cannot do it from the pulpit, I must try to do it from the press. Their canons, which were composed by two hundred and thirty pastors, at the time of the Reformation, are so spir-

itual and apostolic, that I design to translate them into English, if I am spared.

Farewell, my dear brother. Take care, good, constant care, of the flock committed to your charge; especially the sick and the young. Salute all our dear parishioners. Let me still have a part in your prayers, public and private; and rejoice in the Lord, as, through grace, I am enabled to do in all my little tribulations.

I am your affectionate friend and fellow-labourer,

J. F.

XXVIII.—TO MR. WILLIAM WASE.

NYON, *Sept.* 15, 1780.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—You also are entitled to many thanks: receive them from me, till I can return you something more substantial. Give my love and thanks to the preachers who come and help us. Enforce my little exhortation to the societies in much love. Go and comfort from me Mrs. Palmer and Mrs. Cartwright; and since God has placed you all in a widowed state, agree to take Jesus for a never-dying friend and bridegroom. Your Maker is your husband. He is all in all; and what, then, have you lost? Christ is yours, and all things with him. The resurrection day will soon come. Prepare yourselves for the marriage-feast of the Lamb, and till then rejoice in the expectation of that day. I sympathize with our sickly friends, widow Matthews, M. Blummer, L. Whittaker, I. York, and S. Aston. Salute them kindly from me. Help them to trim their lamps, and wait for the Bridegroom. Bid them not be discouraged. Thank Thomas and Nelly Fennel for their love to the preachers, and give them mine, as well as John Owen, &c., by whom I send it to the little companies they meet with, to call for strength, comfort, and help in time of need. Fare ye all well in Jesus. I say again, farewell. I am yours,

J. F.

XXIX.—TO MR. THOMAS YORK.

NYON, *Sept.* 15, 1780.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—You see, by my letter to Mr. Greaves, that I am in good hopes of seeing you, at the latest, next spring. I have been so well, that my friends here thought of giving me a wife; but what should I do with a Swiss wife at Madeley? I want rather an English nurse; but, more still, a mighty Saviour; and, thanks be to God, that I have. Help me to rejoice in that never-dying, never-moving Friend.

Having heard that my dear friend Ireland has discharged the greatest part of my debt, I have not sent money; but I hope to bring with me £100 to make up that gap, and reimburse my friends in part, till I can do it altogether. But I shall never be able to pay you the debt of kindness I have contracted with you. I look to Jesus, my surety, for that: may he repay you a thousand fold! Remember me kindly to Mrs. York, Mrs. Harper, and all that yet remember your obliged friend and brother,

J. F.

XXX.—TO THE SOCIETIES IN AND ABOUT MADELEY.

NYON, *September* 15, 1780.

GRACE and peace, truth and love, be multiplied unto you all. Stand fast in the Lord, my dear brethren. Stand fast to Jesus; stand fast to one another; stand fast to the vow we have so often renewed together upon our knees, and at the Lord's table. Resolve to save yourselves altogether. Do not be so unloving, so cowardly, as to let one of your little company fall into the hands of the world and the devil; and agree to crucify the body of sin altogether.

I am still in a strait between the work which Providence cuts out for me here, and the love which draws me to you.

When I shall have the pleasure of seeing you, let it not be embittered with the sorrow of finding any of you half-hearted and lukewarm. Let me find you all strong in the Lord, and increased in humble love. Salute from me all that followed with us fifteen years ago. Care still for your old brethren. Let there be no Cain among you, no Esau, no Lot's wife. Let the love of David and Jonathan, heightened by that of Martha, Mary, Lazarus, and our Lord, shine in all your thoughts, your tempers, your words, your looks, and your actions. If you love one another, your little meetings will be a renewed feast; and the God of love, who is peculiarly present where two or three are gathered together in the name of Jesus, and in the spirit of love, will abundantly bless you. Bear me still upon your breasts in prayer, as I do you upon mine; and rejoice with me, that the Lord who made, redeemed, and comforts us, bears us all upon his. I am, yours in him,

J. F.

XXXI.—TO MR. JOHN OWEN.

NYON, *Feb. 14, 1781.*

I THANK you, my dear brother, for your kind lines. I have deferred answering them till I could inform you of the time of my departure hence, which you will see in my letter to Mr. Wase. I hope you help both Mr. Greaves and the preachers to stir up the people in my parish. Strengthen the things that remain, and are ready to die. I hope you take counsel with Michael Onions, Mrs. Palmer, and Molly Cartwright, about the most effectual means to recover the backsliders, and to keep together in Christ and to each other those who still hold their shield. Salute them kindly from me; and tell them that I hope they will give me a good account of their little companies and of themselves.

If I were not a minister, I would be a schoolmaster, to have the pleasure of bringing up children in the fear of

the Lord : that pleasure is yours ; relish it, and it will comfort and strengthen you in your work. The joy of the Lord and of charity, is our strength. Salute the children from me ; and tell them I long to show them the way to happiness and heaven. Pray, have you mastered the stiffness and shyness of your temper ? Charity gives a meekness, an affability, a child-like simplicity and openness which nature has denied you, that grace might have all the honour of it. Let me find you shining by these virtues, and you will revive me much. God bless your labour about the sheep and the lambs !

I need not tell you to remember me to your friends, not excepting your brother-in-law, your sister, and your niece Sally ; to whose friendship I recommend my god-daughter, Patty Cartwright. Go to James Hinksman ; give him my love, and ask his for me, and his old brethren. Give the same commission to T. Fennel and Nelly, with respects to Samuel Stretton and his wife ; likewise to Sergeant Lee, with respects to his brother Thomas ; and to I. Tranter, T. Banks, and T. Pool, with respects to their friends about them. Remember me to all friends.

I am yours affectionately,

J. F.

P. S. Read the following note to all that fear God and love Jesus and each other, assembling in Madeley church :—

MY DEAR BRETHREN,—My heart leaps with joy at the thought of coming to see you, and bless the Lord with you. Let us not stay to praise him till we see each other. Let us see him in his Son, in his word, in his works, and in all the members of Christ. How slow will post-horses go in comparison of love !

“ Quick as seraphic flames we move,
To reign with Christ in endless day.”

Meet me, as I do you—in spirit; and we shall not stay till April or May to bless God together: now will be the time of union and love.

XXXII.—TO MR. WILLIAM WASE.

NYON, *Feb.* 14, 1781.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I thank you for your kind remembrance of me. I need not be urged to return: brotherly love draws me to Madeley, and circumstances drive me hence. With pleasure I see the days lengthen, and hasten the happy hour when I shall see the little flock rejoicing in God, as, through mercy, I do. I am exceedingly glad that there is a revival on your side the water, and that you are obliged to enlarge your room.

I wish I could contribute to shake the dry bones in my parish; but I have no confidence in the flesh; and what I could not do when I was in my strength, I have little prospect of doing now that my strength is broken. However, I do not despair; for the work is not mine, but the Lord's. If the few who love the gospel would be simple and zealous, God would again hear their prayers for those who are content to go on in the broad way. I thank you for your view of the iron bridge. I hope the word and the faith that works by love will erect a more solid and durable bridge to unite those who travel together toward Sion.

My friend Ireland invites me to go and join him in the south of France; and I long to see whether I could not have more liberty to preach the word among the Papists than among the Protestants. But it is so little I can do, that I doubt much whether it is worth while going so far upon so little a chance. If I were stronger, and had more time, the fear of being hanged should not detain me. I trust to set out next month, and to be in England in May: it will not be my fault if it is not in April.

I am here in the midst of the rumours of war. The burghers of Geneva on the side of the opposition have disarmed the garrison, and taken possession of one of the gates. I had, however, the luck to get in and bring away my nephew, who is a student there. Some troops are preparing to go and block them up. The Lord may at this time punish the repeated backslidings of those Laodicean Christians, most of whom have turned infidels. This event may a little retard my journey, as I must pass through Geneva. It also puts off the printing of my manuscript; for there is nothing going on in that unhappy town but disputes, and fights, and mounting of guards. Remember me in much love to Mr. Greaves, Mr. Gilpin, and the preachers who labour with us. O! my friend, give yourself wholly up to the Lord, and you will have that peace and joy, through Christ and righteousness, which will be worth a little heaven to you. Adieu. Yours,

J. F.

XXXIII.—TO MR. MICHAEL ONIONS.

NON, *March, 1781.*

I THANK you, my dear brother, for your kind remembrance of me, and for your letters: I hope to bring my fuller thanks to you in person. Come, hold up your hands. Confirm the feeble knees. Set up an Ebenezer every hour of the day. "In every thing give thanks;" and in order to this, "pray without ceasing, and rejoice ever more." My heart sympathizes with poor Molly Cartwright. Tell her from me, that her husband lives in Him who is the resurrection, and that I want her to live there with him. In Christ is no death, but the victory over death. O let us live in him, to him, for him, who more than repairs all our losses! I long to rejoice with her in hopes of meeting our departed friends where parting and trouble shall be no more.

My love to your wife: tell her she promised me to be Jesus's as well as yours. I trust her mother ripens faster for glory than for the grave. I hope to find her quite mellowed by the humble love of the gospel. My love to John Owen, and all our other leaders, and by them to the few who do not tire by the way. With regard to the others, take them in the arms of prayer and love, and carry them out of Egypt and Sodom, if they are loath to come. Despair of none. You know, "charity hopeth all things," and brings many things to pass. All things are possible to him that believeth; all things are easy to him that loveth. God be with you, my dear brother, and make you faithful unto death. It is my prayer for you, and all the society, and all my dear neighbours, my dear parishioners, to whom I beg to be remembered. I have no place to write their names, but I pray they may be all written in "the book of life." God is merciful, gracious, and faithful: I set my seal to his loving-kindness. Witness my heart and hand,

JOHN FLETCHER.

FAMILIAR LETTERS.

XXXIV.—TO THE REV. JOHN WESLEY.

TERN, *Nov.* 24, 1756.

REVEREND SIR,—As I look upon you as my spiritual guide, and cannot doubt of your patience to hear, and your experience to answer a question proposed by one of your people, I freely lay my case before you.

Since the first time I began to feel the love of God shed abroad in my soul, which was, I think, at seven years of age, I resolved to give myself up to him, and to the service of his Church, if ever I was fit for it; but the corruption which is in the world, and that which was in my heart, soon weakened, if not erased, those first characters which grace had written upon it. However, I went through my studies with a design of going into orders; but afterward, upon serious reflection, feeling I was unequal to such a burden, and disgusted by the necessity I should be under to subscribe the doctrine of predestination, I yielded to the desire of my friends, who would have me to go into the army: but just before I was quite engaged in a military employment, I met with such disappointments as occasioned my coming to England. Here I was called outwardly three times to go into orders; but upon praying to God, that if those calls were not from him, they might come to nothing, something always blasted the designs of my friends; and in this I have often admired the goodness of God, who prevented my rushing into that important employment, as the horse into the battle. I never was more thankful for this favour than since I heard the gospel in its purity. Before, I had been afraid, but then I trembled to meddle with holy

things; and resolved to work out my salvation privately, without engaging in a way of life, which required so much more grace and gifts than I was conscious I possessed; yet from time to time felt warm and strong desires to cast myself and my inability on the Lord, if I should be called any more, knowing that he could help me, and show his strength in my weakness; and these desires were increased by some little success which attended my exhortations and letters to my friends.

I think it necessary to let you know, sir, that my patron often desired me to take orders, and said he would soon help me to a living; to which I coldly answered, I was not fit, and that, besides, I did not know how to get a title. The thing was in that state when, about six weeks ago, a gentleman I hardly knew offered me a living, which, in all probability, will be vacant soon; and a clergyman I never spoke to gave me, of his own accord, the title of curate to one of his livings. Now, sir, the question which I beg you to decide is, whether I must and can make use of that title to get into orders? For, with respect to the living, were it vacant, I have no mind to it, because I think I could preach with more fruit in my native country, and in my own tongue.

I am in suspense: on one side my heart tells me I must try, and it tells me so whenever I feel any degree of the love of God and man; on the other, when I examine whether I am fit for it, I so plainly see my want of gifts, and especially of that soul of all the labours of a minister,—love, continual, universal, flaming love, that my confidence disappears; I accuse myself of pride to dare to entertain the desire of supporting one day the ark of God; and conclude that an extraordinary punishment will, sooner or later, overtake my rashness. As I am in both of these frames successively, I must own, sir, I do not see which of these two ways before me I can take with safety: and I shall gladly be ruled by

you, because I trust God will direct you in giving me the advice you think will best conduce to his glory, which is the only thing I would have in view in this affair. I know how precious your time is, and desire no long answer: "Persist," or "Forbear," will satisfy and influence,

Reverend sir, your unworthy servant,

J. F.

XXXV.—TO THE SAME.

LONDON, *May* 26, 1757.

REV. SIR,—If I did not write to you before Mrs. Wesley had asked me, it was not that I wanted a remembrancer within, but rather an encourager without. There is generally upon my heart such a sense of my unworthiness, that I sometimes dare hardly open my mouth before a child of God, and think it an unspeakable honour to stand before one who has recovered something of the image of God, or sincerely seeks after it. Is it possible that such a sinful worm as I should have the privilege to converse with one whose soul is sprinkled with the blood of my Lord? The thought amazes, confounds me, and fills my eyes with tears of humble joy. Judge, then, at what distance I must see myself from you, if I am so much below the least of your children; and whether a remembrancer within suffices to make me presume to write to you, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear.

I rejoice that you find everywhere an increase of praying souls. I doubt not but the prayer of the righteous hath great power with God; yet I cannot believe that it should hinder the fulfilling of Christ's gracious promises to his church. He must, and certainly will, come at the time appointed; for he is not slack, as some men count slackness; and although he would have all to come to repentance, yet he has not forgot to be true and just. Only he will come with more mercy, and will increase the light that shall be

at eventide, according to his promise in Zechariah xiv, 7. I should rather think that the visions are not yet plainly disclosed, and that the day and year in which the Lord will begin to make bare his arm openly are still concealed from us.

I must say to Mr. Walsh, as he once said to me concerning God: "I wish I could attend him everywhere, as Elisha did Elijah." But since the will of God calls me from him, I must submit, and drink the cup prepared for me. I have not seen him, unless for a few moments, three or four times before divine service. We must meet at the throne of grace, or meet but seldom. O when will the communion of saints be complete! Lord, hasten the time, and let me have a place among them that love thee, and love one another in sincerity.

I set out in two days for the country. O may I be faithful! harmless like a dove, wise like a serpent, and bold as a lion for the common cause! O Lord, do not forsake me! Stand by the weakest of thy servants, and enable thy children to bear with me, and wrestle with thee in my behalf. O bear with me, dear sir, and give me your blessing every day, and the Lord will return it to you sevenfold.

I am, reverend and dear sir, your unworthy servant,

J. F.

XXXVI.—TO MRS. GLYNNE.

LONDON, *April* 18, 1758.

MADAM,—As it is never too late to do what multiplicity of business, rather than forgetfulness, has forced us to defer, I am not ashamed, though after some months, to use the liberty you gave me to inquire after the welfare of your soul; and that so much the more, as I am conscious I have not forgotten you at the throne of grace. O may my petitions have reached heaven, and forced from thence at least some drops of those spiritual showers of "righteousness,

peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost," which I implore for you.

Though, I trust, the unction from above teaches you all things needful to salvation, and especially the necessity of continuing instant in prayer, and watching thereunto with all perseverance; yet I think it my duty to endeavour to add wings to your desires after holiness, by enforcing them with mine. O were I but clothed with all the righteousness of Christ, my prayers would avail much, and the lukewarmness of my brethren would not increase my guilt, as being myself an instance of that coldness of love which puts me upon interceding for them.

Though I speak of lukewarmness, I do not accuse you, madam, of having given way to it; on the contrary, it is my duty, and the joy of my heart, to hope that you stir up more and more the gift of God which is in you; that the evidences of your interest in a bleeding Lord get clearer every day; that the love of Christ constrains you more and more to deny yourself, take up your cross in all things, and follow him patiently through bad and good report; in a word, that, continually leaving "the things which are behind," you stretch forward, through sunshine or darkness, "toward the prize of your high calling in Jesus Christ,"—I mean, a heart emptied of pride, and "filled with the fulness of God." This is the hope which I delight to entertain of you; and I describe it not out of flattery, madam, but with an intent that if you fall short in anything, these lines may be an instrument, in the hand of God, to stir you up again, and make you look on all things as "dung and dross," in comparison of "the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ," with whom we ought to be crucified to the world, and the world to us.

I have often thought of you, madam, in reading the letters of a lady,* who was a Christian, and an eminent Chris-

* Mrs. Lefevre.

tian, not to say one of the brightest lights that God has raised since the late revival of godliness. The reproach of Christ was her crown of rejoicing, his cross her continual support, his followers her dearest companions, his example the pattern of her conversation. She lived a saint, and died an angel. Each one of her letters may be a pattern for Christian correspondence, by the simplicity, edification, and love they breathe in every line. O when shall I write as she did? When my heart shall be full of God as hers was.

May the Lord enable you to walk in her steps, and grant me to see you shining among the humble, loving Marys of this age, as she did but a few months ago. Her God is our God. The same Spirit that animated her is waiting at the door of our hearts, to cleanse them, and fill them with his consolations, if we will but exclude the world, and let him in. Why should we then give way to despondency, and refuse to cherish that lively hope which if any one has he will "purify himself, even as God is pure?" Take courage then, madam, and consider that the hour of self-denial and painful wrestling with God will be short, and the time of victorious recompense as long as eternity itself. May the Lord enable you and me to weigh that consideration in the balance of his sanctuary, and to act agreeably; and may that gracious Being who invites the young man to honour him in the days of his youth, grant you to see him whom he has given you ponder those solemn truths betimes, and find by a happy experience that none is happier than he who takes early the Lord's yoke upon himself.

I conclude by commending you to the Lord, and to the word of his grace: and, recommending myself to your prayers, I am, madam, your obedient servant for Christ's sake,

J. F.

XXXVII.—TO THE REV. CHARLES WESLEY.

TERN, *June 6, 1758.*

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—Before I took my leave of you, the Sunday I set out, and, indeed, almost all the time I was at the communion-table, (though I was blessed there in a good measure in my soul,) I felt some degrees of condemnation, as if by setting out on that day I profaned the Sabbath and the Lord's Supper; whereupon those words came strongly to my mind, "Therefore many among you are sick and weak, and some are dead." I immediately found myself out of order, and had much ado to reach home after the service was over. Till the horses were at the door, I thought I should not be able to go, but found myself then a little strengthened. The next day I was much worse; and they were obliged to make room for me in the coach. The day after, I was still worse; and really thought it would be my last. About noon, while the family was at dinner, I collected what little strength I had left, and falling prostrate before the Lord, I besought him not to cut me off among heathens, but grant me the favour of comforting and being comforted by some Christian at my death. This request, though contrary to true resignation, I think reached the ear of the Lord. He rebuked the rage of the fever, and sensibly filled my soul with all peace in believing; so that I saw that I was yet for the land of the living. Nay, a few hours after, I found myself as well as ever; and so I continue now by God's grace.

Now what have I to do but to make a good use of the health and leisure I have in this retreat? I see my duty, and I form resolutions; but, alas! I carry with me a wicked heart, which enters not into these projects; and Satan, as the servants of God have experienced in all ages, is never more assiduous and eager to injure us than in re-

tirement. O, if I could but be so entirely penetrated with the knowledge of my weakness, that I dared not lose sight of my Saviour for a moment, without being troubled and overcome with fear, I should go on with security in this solitude; but sometimes indolence, sometimes discouragement, and sometimes security, raise clouds, which the Sun of righteousness has scarcely dispersed in order to enlighten my soul. I feel, however, by the grace of God, determined to sustain all the attacks of the flesh and of the devil, and to seize the kingdom of heaven by force. The Lord has been particularly gracious to me, in putting it into my heart to pray for the brethren by his Holy Spirit. I have experienced more power and more pleasure in this duty of intercession than I have ever done. You will rightly judge that you are not forgotten in these poor prayers; and I hope that you also sometimes remember the poor broken reed, who is alone in the midst of the desert, exposed to the fury of all the winds. I wrote to Mr. Perronet, in answer to a letter which I had received from him, in which he inquires concerning the success of the attempt which I made with you, for which you allowed him to labour under you in the vineyard of our Lord. I spoke to him frankly, and as you desired. I hope you have overcome the scruple which prevented you from giving Mr. Maxfield full liberty to labour for the Lord among us. The interest of the brethren, and no other motive, makes me desire it. I see no other day for me to preach here. Blessed be the Lord, he ordains that I at length should have more leisure to hear that which he has to teach his servant. I shall not see you at Bristol; the journey of my pupils not taking place at the time expected. May the Lord be with you more and more in your labours and in your devotions! Farewell.

J. F.

XXXVIII.—TO THE SAME.

LONDON, *Dec. 12, 1758.*

MY DEAR SIR,—If my silence were owing to forgetfulness, I should blush at not availing myself more frequently of your permission to write; but the idea I entertain, that nothing but your great condescension can make my correspondence supportable, makes me sometimes act in a manner quite contrary to the sentiments of my heart.

Before I left Tern, the Lord gave me a medicine to prepare me to suffer what awaited me here.

This humiliation prepared me so well, that I was not surprised to learn that a person in London had spread abroad many false and scandalous things of me during my absence, and that the minds of many were prejudiced against me. In one sense, I took a pleasure in thinking I was going to be rejected by the children of God, and that my Saviour would become more dear, under the idea, that as in heaven, so now on earth, I should have none but him. The first time I appeared in the chapel, many were so offended, that it was with difficulty they could forbear interrupting me in my prayer, to tell me, “Physician, heal thyself.” I was on the point of declining to officiate, fearing I should only give fresh offence; indeed, I should have done so, had it not been for my friend Bernon, who pressed me to stand firm, representing the triumph my silence would give my enemies, &c. His reasons appeared to me so cogent, that, as your brother did not reject my assistance, I read prayers, and engaged to preach sometimes in a morning, which I have accordingly continued to do.

The same day I arrived in London, our poor friend Bernon took to his bed, as if the Lord had waited my presence to give the blow. Three days after, the fever increased, and appeared to be dangerous. The next day, which was

Wednesday, he settled his temporal concerns. Friday evening he was free from fever, and I had some hopes of his life; but on Saturday it appeared that the fever was the slightest part of his malady, and the physician said he would die of an inflammation in his bowels; which was the case on Monday, after an illness of eight days. I sat up with him three nights, and saw him as often as I could by day; and, blessed be God, I did not see him for a moment without the full assurance of faith. His soul was, in general, divided between the exercise of repentance, and of faith in the blood of the Lamb: however, from time to time, repentance gave place to rejoicing; and when he appeared better, he expressed much fear of returning to life. Nevertheless, one day, when I was not with him, he had a conflict with the enemy of his faith, which continued an hour or two, when he came off conqueror. The violence of the fever sometimes threw him into a delirium, and that was the case some hours before his dissolution. The last words he uttered, before the strength of his disease deprived him of speech, were, "O what love! what love!" I have in my heart a clear testimony that he died the death of the just. Thus, to recompense me for the injury Satan has done me by a false friend, the Lord has taken to himself a true one, whom he will restore to me again in the last great day. Such a loss is a real gain.

I sincerely rejoice in the health of Mrs. Wesley. Present my compliments to her—not those of the children of this world, but those of the servants of Christ; and do not forget to give your little Charles a kiss of peace and prayer for me. Adieu.

J. F.

XXXIX.—TO THE SAME.

LONDON, *March 22, 1759.*

MY DEAR SIR,—You left me without permitting me to say farewell ; but that shall not hinder me from wishing you a good journey ; and I flatter myself that you are in the habit of returning my prayers. I have even shared the joy of Mrs. Wesley in seeing you again. Happier than the afflicted Jesus, you leave your own, and they regret your absence ; you return to your own, and they receive you with joy. You cannot yet be rendered perfect by suffering—your father and mother have never forsaken you ; but no matter—you have, no doubt, your afflictions, and probably the Lord throws you secretly in a crucible, that you may come forth as gold seven times tried in the fire. May he lay his hand upon you, and fill you with his strength ! He will not forget Mrs. Wesley : I have had some assurances that he will not, when I have been enabled to lay at the feet of Jesus the delightful burden you put upon me, by interesting me in her present critical circumstances. If I were more humble, I would beg you to present her my humble respects ; and if I were strong in faith like Elizabeth, I could say, like her, with that fulness of spirit which should go to her heart, “Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb !” But it becomes not me to presume so far : I shall be happy if my good wishes may be found sincere before God.

Since your departure I have lived more than ever like a hermit. It seems to me that I am an unprofitable weight upon the earth. I want to hide myself from all. I tremble when the Lord favours me with a sight of myself : I tremble to think of preaching only to dishonour God. To-morrow I preach at West-street, with all the feelings of Jonah. O would to God I might be attended with success ! If the

Lord shall, in any degree, sustain my weakness, I shall consider myself as indebted to your prayers. The adversary avails himself mightily of the enthusiasm of Miss A——d to prevent the success of my preaching in French; but I believe that my own unworthiness does more for the devil than ten Miss A——ds. However, I have thought it my duty to endeavour to stem the torrent of discouragement, praying the Lord to provide for this poor people a pastor after his own heart, whom the wandering sheep may be willing to hear, and who may bring them to himself.

A proposal has lately been made to me, to accompany Mr. Nathanael Gilbert to the West Indies. I have weighed the matter: but, on one hand, I feel that I have neither zeal, nor grace, nor talents, to expose myself to the temptations and labours of a mission to the West Indies; and, on the other, I believe that if God call me thither, the time is not yet come. I wish to be certain that I am converted myself, before I leave my converted brethren to convert heathens. Pray let me know what you think of this business. If you condemn me to put the sea between us, the command would be a hard one; but I might possibly prevail on myself to give you that proof of the deference I pay to your judicious advice.

Give me some account of Mrs. Wesley, and of the godfather she designs for your little Charles; and, that she may not labour under a deception, tell her how greatly I want wisdom; and add, that I have no more grace than wisdom. If, after all, she will not reject so unworthy a sponsor, remember that I have taken you for a father and adviser, and that the charge will, in the end, devolve upon you. Adieu. May the plenitude of Christ fill you, and may some drops of that precious oil run from you to me!

J. F.

P. S. I have taken possession of my little hired chamber. There I have outward peace, and I wait for that

which is within. I was this morning with Lady Huntingdon, who salutes you, and unites with me to say, that we have need of you to make one in our threefold cord, and to beg you will hasten your return, when Providence permits. Our conversation was deep, and full of the energy of faith on the part of the countess: as to me, I sat like Saul at the feet of Gamaliel.

XL.—TO THE SAME.

LONDON, *April*, — 1759.

MY DEAR SIR,—With a heart bowed down with grief, and eyes bathed with tears, occasioned by our late heavy loss, I mean the death of Mr. Walsh, I take my pen to pray you to intercede for me. What! that sincere, laborious, and zealous servant of God! Was he saved only as by fire, and was not his prayer heard till the twelfth hour was just expiring? O where shall I appear; I, who am an unprofitable servant? Would to God my eyes were fountains of water to weep for my sins! Would to God I might pass the rest of my days in crying, “Lord, have mercy upon me!” All is vanity—grace, talents, labours, if we compare them with the mighty stride we have to take from time into eternity. Lord, remember me, now that thou art in thy kingdom!

I have preached and administered the sacrament at West-street sometimes in the holidays. May God water the poor seed that I have sown, and give it fruitfulness, though it be only in one soul.

I have lately seen so much weakness in my heart, both as a minister and a Christian, that I know not which is most to be pitied, the man, the believer, or the preacher. Could I, at last, be truly humbled, and continue so always, I should esteem myself happy in making this discovery. I preach merely to keep the chapel open, until God shall send a workman after his own heart. *Nos numeri su-*

mus.* this is almost all I can say of myself. If I did not know myself a little better than I did formerly, I should tell you, that I had ceased altogether from placing any confidence in my repentances, &c., &c.; but I see my heart is so full of deceit, that I cannot depend on my knowledge of myself.

You are not well.—Are you, then, going to leave us, like poor Walsh? Ah, stay! and permit me to go first, that when my soul shall leave the body, you may commend it to the mercy of my Saviour.

The day Mr. Walsh died, the Lord gave our brethren the spirit of supplication for him, and many unutterable groans were offered up for him at Spitalfields, where I was. Who shall render us the same kind offices? Is not our hour near? O, my God, when thou comest, prepare us, and we shall be ready! You owe your children an elegy upon his death, and you cannot employ your poetic talents on a better subject.

Give me some account of yourself, of my god-daughter, and of Charles. Present my respects to Mrs. Wesley, whom the Lord will strengthen in body and soul, if my prayers ascend to his throne; and believe me your poor brother and servant,

Soliciting your prayers,

J. F.

XLI.—TO THE SAME.

LONDON, *June 1, 1759.*

MY DEAR BROTHER, OR RATHER, MY DEAR FATHER,—Suffer me to complain that you forget us. I wish my letter may miss you, and that you may come in person and answer it before it reaches you. I know what detains you: I approve your prudence, but rejoice not at it. How is your health, and that of Mrs. Wesley, and your little family?

* I fill up an empty space.

The Lord gives me health of body ; and, from time to time, I feel strength in my soul. O when shall the witness who is dead arise ! When shall the Spirit enter into him, and fill him with wisdom, with power, and with love ! Pray for me, and support my weakness as much as you can. I am here, *umbra pro corpore*.* I preach as your substitute ; come and fill worthily an office of which I am unworthy. My pupils return to Cambridge on Monday, and the whole family sets out for Shropshire on the 11th. Shall I not see you before that time ? I have rejected the offer of Dr. Taylor, and have no other temptations than those of a bad heart. “That is enough,” you will say. I grant it ; but we must fight before we conquer. Pray that my courage may not fail. Come, and the Lord come with you.

I am, &c.

J. F.

XLII.—TO THE SAME.

TERN, *July 19, 1759.*

MY DEAR SIR,—Instead of apologizing for my silence, I will tell you that I have twenty times endeavoured to break it, but without effect. I will simply relate the cause of my silence, referring you to the remembrance of your own temptations for that patience you must exercise to a weak, tempted soul.

This is the fourth summer that I have been brought hither, in a peculiar manner, to be tempted of the devil in a wilderness ; and I have improved so little by my past exercises, that I have not defended myself better than in the first year. Being arrived here, I began to spend my time as I had determined, one part in prayer, and the other in meditation on the Holy Scriptures. The Lord blessed my devotions, and I advanced from conquering to conquer, leading every thought captive to the

* A shadow rather than a substance.

obedience of Jesus Christ, when it pleased God to show me some of the folds of my heart. As I looked for nothing less than such a discovery, I was extremely surprised, so much so as to forget Christ. You may judge already what was the consequence. A spiritual languor seized on all the powers of my soul; and I suffered myself to be carried away quietly by a current, with the rapidity of which I was unacquainted.

Neither doubt nor despair troubled me for a moment: my temptation took another course. It appeared to me, that God would be much more glorified by my damnation than my salvation. It seemed altogether incompatible with the holiness, the justice, and the veracity of the Supreme Being, to admit so stubborn an offender into his presence. I could do nothing but be astonished at the patience of God; and I would willingly have sung those verses of Desbaraux, if I had had strength:—

“Tonne, frappe, il est temps, rend-moi guerre pour guerre;
J'adore en périssant la raison qui t'aigrit.”

Do not imagine, however, that I was in a state of evangelical repentance; no: a man who repents desires to be saved, but I desired it not: I was even impatient to go to my own place, and secretly wished that God would for a moment give me the exercise of his iron sceptre, to break myself to pieces as a vessel to dishonour. A bitter and cruel zeal against myself and all the sinners who were with me filled all my thoughts and all my desires. The devil, who well knew how to improve the opportunity, blew without ceasing the sparks of some corruptions which I thought extinguished, or at the point of being so, till at last the fire began to appear without. This opened my eyes, and I felt it was time to implore succour. It is now eight days since I endeavoured to pray, but almost without success: yesterday, however, as I sang one of your hymns,

the Lord lifted up my head, and commanded me to face my enemies. By his grace I am already conqueror; and I doubt not that I shall soon be more than conqueror. Although I deserve it not, nevertheless, hold up my hands till all these Amalekites be put to flight.

I am, &c.,

J. F.

XLIII.—TO THE SAME.

LONDON, Sept. 14, 1759.

MY DEAR SIR,—I thank you for your speedy answer; and nothing but the assurance of your speedy arrival is wanting to make my happiness complete. Your last lines drew tears from my eyes: I cannot wait till your death to beseech you to give me that benediction of which you speak. I conjure you, in the name of Christ, to give it me when you read these lines, and to repeat it as frequently as you think of a poor brother who needs the prayers of every one, and who cannot part with yours.

I accept with pleasure the obliging proposal which you make me for the approaching winter; and I entreat you to consider it less as a proposal, than as an engagement into which you have entered, and of which I have a right to solicit the fulfilment. Permit me only to add to it one condition, which is, to make our reading, &c., tend as much as possible to that poverty of spirit which I so greatly need.

A few days ago the Lord gave me two or three lessons on that subject; but, alas! how have I forgotten them! I saw, I felt, that I was entirely void of wisdom and virtue. I was ashamed of myself, and I could say, with a degree of feeling which I cannot describe, *Nil ago, nil habeo, sum nil; in pulvere serpo*.* I could then say, what Gregory Lopez was enabled to say at all times, "There

* "I do nothing, have nothing, am nothing; I crawl in the dust."

is no man of whom I have not a better opinion than of myself." I could have placed myself under the feet of the most atrocious sinner, and have acknowledged him for a saint, in comparison of myself. If ever I am humble and patient, if ever I enjoy solid peace of mind, it must be "in this very spirit." Ah! why do I not actually find these virtues? Because I am filled with self-sufficiency, and am possessed by that self-esteem which blinds me, and hinders me from doing justice to my own demerits. O pray that the Spirit of Jesus may remove these scales from my eyes for ever, and compel me to retire into my own nothingness.

To what a monstrous idea had you well-nigh given birth! What! the labours of my ministry under you deserve a salary! I, who have done nothing but dishonour God hitherto, and am not in a condition to do anything else for the future! If, then, I am permitted to stand in the courts of the Lord's house, is it not for me to make an acknowledgment rather than to receive one? If I ever receive anything of the Methodist Church, it shall be only as an indigent mendicant receives an alms, without which he would perish. Such were some of the thoughts which passed through my mind with regard to the proposal you made to me in London; and I doubt whether my own vanity or your goodness will be able to efface the impressions they have left.

I have great need of your advice relative to the letters which I receive one after another from my relations, who unite in their invitations to me to return to my own country: one says, to settle my affairs there; another, to preach there; a third, to assist him to die, &c. They press me to declare whether I renounce my family, and the demands I have upon it; and my mother desires that I will at least go and see her; and commands me to do so in the strongest terms. What answer shall I make? If she thought as you

do, I should write to her, "*Ubi Christiani, ibi patria*;"* my mother, my brethren, my sisters are those who do the will of my heavenly Father. But she is not in a state of mind to digest such an answer: a mother is a mother long. On the other hand, I have no inclination to yield to their desires, which appear to me merely natural; for I shall lose precious time, and incur expense. My presence is not absolutely necessary to my concerns; and it is more probable that my relations will pervert me to vanity and interest than that I shall convert them to genuine Christianity. Lastly, I shall have no opportunity to exercise my ministry. Our Swiss ministers, who preach only once a week, will not look upon me with a more favourable eye than the ministers here; and irregular preaching is impracticable, and would only cause me either to be laid in prison, or immediately banished from the country.

How does your family do? Is the small-pox as far off as the French? And does your wife disquiet herself, while all the nation resumes courage? Salute her from me, and tell her that her brother, the captain, who is very well, trains his men as well as he can for her defence. May the Almighty be your defence day and night! What he protects, is well protected. Permit me to thank you for the sentence from Kempis with which you close your letter, by returning to you another:—"You run no risk in considering yourself as the wickedest of men: but you are in danger if you prefer yourself to any one." I am, &c.

J. F.

XLIV.—TO THE SAME.

TERN, Sept. 24, 1759.

MY DEAR SIR,—For some days past, the hope of hearing from you has been balanced by the fear that you were not in a condition to write. This last idea prevails so much,

* "Where there are Christians, there is my country."

that I take my pen to entreat you to deliver me from the inquietude which I suffer from your silence. If the gout prevents you from writing, employ the hand of a friend ; if you are in the third heaven of contemplation and love, let brotherly love, for a moment, bring you down ; if you wander in the desert of temptation, let sympathy unite you to a miserable man, who feels himself undone.

Since my last, I have taken some steps toward the knowledge of myself. If you inquire what I have learned, I answer, that I am naked of everything but pride and unbelief. Yesterday I was seized with the desire of making rhymes, and I versified my thoughts on the present state of my soul in a hymn, the first part of which I now send you. If the poetry do not deserve reading, the language will recall to mind your French.

How does Mrs. Wesley and your little family do ? The rumour here is, that the French are at Liverpool. I am glad they do not think of Bristol. Salute the trembling half of yourself from me, and tell her how much I rejoice that your quarters have been in safety hitherto, and that my hope is, they will continue so to the end of the war.

May the care you take of your health have the success I wish ; and while I wait the event, may He who enabled St. Paul to say, "When I am weak, then am I strong," sustain you in all your infirmities, and fill your inward man with his mighty power ! At the moment I was going to seal mine, I received your dear letter. You will see by the hymn, in which I have attempted to paint my heart, that I have at present far other things to do than to think of going on to perfection, even laying the foundation of the spiritual house ; much less, then, can I help forward those who seek it. I am, &c.

J. F.

XLV.—TO THE SAME.

TERN, *Sept. 29, 1759.*

MY DEAR SIR,—Your silence began to make me uneasy, and your letter had well-nigh made me draw my pen over one I had written to ask the cause of it. The Lord afflicts you: that is enough to silence every complaint, and I will not open my mouth, except it be to pray the Lord to enable you and yours to bring forth those fruits of righteousness which attend the trials of his children. Take care of yourself, for the sake of the Lord's little flock, and for me, who, with all the impatience of brotherly love, reckon every day till I can have the pleasure of embracing you.

If I know anything of true brotherly love, (of which I often doubt,) it agrees perfectly well with the love of God, as the sounds of the different parts in music agree with each other. Their union arises from their just difference; and they please sometimes so much the more, as they appear the most opposed. The opposition of sentiments between divine and brotherly love, together with the subordination of the latter, forms that delightful combat in the soul of a believer, that being divided between two, of the apostle, (Phil. i, 23,) which concludes with a sacrifice of resignation, of which the natural man is not capable. Your expression, "Spread the moral sense all o'er," gives me an idea of that charity which I seek. The love of Gregory Lopez appears to me too stoical: I do not find in it that vehement desire, those tears of love, that ardour of seeing and possessing each other in the bowels of Jesus Christ, which I find so frequently in the epistles of St. Paul. If this sensibility be a failing, I do not wish to be exempt from it. What think you?

When I was reading *Telemachus* with my pupils, I was struck with this expression, "He blushed to have been born

with so little feeling for men, and to appear to them so inhuman." I easily applied the first part, and the son of Ulysses gave me an example of Christian repentance, which I wish to follow, till my heart is truly circumcised. Send me some remedy, or give me some advice, against this hardness of heart under which I groan. Apropos, concerning hardness of heart: what you say about reducing a mother to despair, has made me recollect what I have often thought, that the particular fault of the Swiss is to be without natural affection. With respect to that preference which my mother shows me above her other children, I see clearly that I am indebted for almost all the affection she expresses for me in her letters, to my absence from her, which hinders her from seeing my faults: nevertheless, I reproach myself severely that I cannot interest myself in her welfare as much as I did in that of my deceased father: and I am astonished at the difference. I believe the time is not yet come when my presence may be of service to her, and I flatter myself she will not be shocked at my refusal, which I have softened as much as I could.

I fear you did not rightly understand what I wrote about the proposal you made me at London. So far from making conditions, I feel myself unworthy of receiving them. Be it what it may, I thank God that I trouble myself with no temporal things; my only fear is that of having too much, rather than too little, of the things necessary for life. I am weary of abundance: I could wish to be poor with my Saviour; and those whom he hath chosen to be rich in faith, appear to me objects of envy in the midst of their wants. Happy should I be, if a secret pride of heart did not disguise itself under these appearances of humility! Happy should I be if that dangerous serpent did not conceal himself under these sweet flowers, and feed on their juices!

I am, &c.

J. F

XLVI.—TO MRS. RYAN, AND MISS FURLEY.

Oct. 1, 1759.

MY DEAR SISTERS,—I have put off writing to you, lest the action of writing should divert my soul from the awful and delightful worship it is engaged in. But I now conclude I shall be no loser, if I invite you to love Him my soul loveth, to dread Him my soul dreadeth, to adore Him my soul adoreth. Sink with me, or rather, let me sink with you, before the throne of grace ; and while cherubims veil their faces, and cry out, in tender fear and exquisite trembling, “Holy ! holy ! holy !” let us put our mouths in the dust, and echo back the solemn sound, “Holy ! holy ! holy !” Let us plunge ourselves into that ocean of purity. Let us try to fathom the depths of divine mercy ; and, convinced of the impossibility of such an attempt, let us lose ourselves in them. Let us be comprehended by God, if we cannot comprehend him. Let us be supremely happy in God. Let the intenseness of our happiness border on misery, because we can make him no return. Let our head become water, and our eyes fountains of tears,—tears of humble repentance, of solemn joy, of silent admiration, of exalted adoration, of raptured desires, of inflamed transports ; of speechless awe. My God, and my all ! your God, and your all ! our God, and our all ! Praise him ; and with our souls blended in one by divine love, let us with “one mouth glorify the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ ;—our Father, who is over all, through all, and in us all.”

I charge you before the Lord Jesus Christ, who giveth life, and more abundant life ; I entreat you, by all the actings of faith, the exertions of hope, the flames of love you ever felt, sink to greater depths of self-abasing repentance, and rise to greater heights of Christ-exalting joy. And let Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly, more

than you can ask or think, carry on and fulfil in you the work of faith with power; with that power whereby he subdueth all things to himself. "Be steadfast in hope," immovable in patience and love, always abounding in the outward and inward labour of love, and "receive the end of your faith, the salvation of your souls." I am, &c.,

J. F.

XLVII.—TO THE REV. CHARLES WESLEY.

LONDON, *Nov.* 15, 1759.

MY DEAR SIR,—Your letter was not put into my hand till eight days after my arrival in London. I carried the enclosed agreeably to its address, and passed three hours with a modern prodigy,—an humble and pious countess. I went with trembling, and in obedience to your orders; but I soon perceived a little of what the disciples felt when Christ said to them, "It is I, be not afraid." She proposed to me something of what you hinted to me in your garden, namely, to celebrate the communion sometimes at her house in a morning, and to preach when occasion offered: in such a manner, however, as not to restrain my liberty, nor to prevent my assisting you, or preaching to the French Refugees; and that only till Providence should clearly point out the path in which I should go. Charity, politeness, and reason accompanied her offer; and I confess, in spite of the resolution, which I had almost absolutely formed, to fly the houses of the great, without even the exception of the countess's, I found myself so greatly changed, that I should have accepted on the spot a proposal which I should have declined from any other mouth; but my engagement with you withheld me; and, thanking the countess, I told her when I had reflected on her obliging offer, I would do myself the honour of waiting upon her again.

Nevertheless, two difficulties stand in my way. Will it be consistent with that poverty of spirit which I seek?

Can I accept an office for which I have such small talents ? And shall I not dishonour the cause of God by stammering out the mysteries of the gospel in a place where the most approved ministers of the Lord have preached with so much power and so much success ? I suspect that my own vanity gives more weight to this second objection than it deserves to have : what think you ?

I give myself up to your judicious counsels : you take the unnecessary pains to assure me that they are disinterested ; for I cannot doubt it. I feel myself unworthy of them ; much more still of the appellation of “ friend,” with which you honour me. You are an indulgent father to me, and the name of “ son ” suits me better than that of “ brother.”

You ask whether I can with confidence give you up to the mercy of God. Yes, I can ; and I feel that for you which I do not for myself : I am so assured of your salvation, that I ask no other place in heaven than that I may have at your feet. I doubt even if paradise would be a paradise to me, unless it were shared with you ; and the single idea which your question excited, that we might one day be separated, pierced my heart, and bathed my eyes with tears. They were sweet tears, which seemed to water and confirm my hope, or, rather, the certainty I have, that He who hath begun a good work in us will also finish it, and unite me to you in Christ by the bonds of an everlasting love ; and not only to you, but to your children and your wife, whom I salute in Christ. Adieu. I am, &c.,

J. F.

XLVIII.—TO THE SAME.

DUNSTABLE, *March 1, 1760.*

MY DEAR SIR,—I have had a pleasant journey as to my body, but an unhappy one for my soul. Everything required that I should cry without ceasing, “ Lord, be merciful to me a sinner ! ” but, alas ! I have not done so. The fine

weather invites me to execute a design I had half formed, of making a forced march to spend next Sunday at Everton, Mr. Berridge's parish. There may the voice of the Lord be heard by a poor child of Adam, who, like him, is still behind the trees of stupidity and impenitence!

If I do not lose myself across the fields before I get there, and if the Lord be pleased to grant me the spirit of supplication, I will pray for you and your dear sister at P—— until I can again pray with you. Do not forget me, I beseech you, if the Lord bring me to your remembrance. "Cast your bread on the waters," on my behalf; and perhaps you will "find it again after many days." I would fain be with you on those solemn occasions when a thousand voices are raised to heaven, to obtain those graces which I have not; but God's will be done.

Do not forget to present my respects to the countess. If I continue any time at Everton, I shall take the liberty of giving her some account of the work of God in those parts; if not, I will give it her in person. Adieu. The Lord strengthen you in soul and body. I am, &c.,

J. F.

XLIX.—TO THE HON. MRS. —.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—To a believer Jesus is alone the desirable, the everlasting distinction and honour of men. All other advantages, though now so proudly extolled, so vehemently coveted, are, like the down on the thistle, blown away in a moment, and never secure to the possessor. Riches are incapable of satisfying; friends are changeable and precarious; the dear relations who are the delight of our heart are taken away at a stroke; pain and sickness follow ease and health in quick succession: but, amidst all the possible changes of life, Christ is a rock. To see him by faith, to lay hold, to rely upon him, to live upon him—this is the refuge from the storm, the shadow from the heat. May it

be given to you abundantly ! And in order to obtain it, nothing more or less is required of you than a full and frequent confession of your own abominable nature and heart ; then kneeling as a true beggar at the door of mercy, declaring you came there expecting notice and relief, only because God our Saviour came to redeem incarnate devils, and, for the glory of his grace, to convert them into saints and servants of the living God, into children of God and heirs of glory.

I think you take a sure method to perplex yourself, if you want to see your own faith, or look for one moment at yourself for proof of your faith ; others must see it in your works, but you must feel it in your heart. The glory of Jesus is now by faith realized to the mind, in some such manner as an infinitely grand and beautiful object, which appears in the firmament of heaven : it arrests and fixes the attention of the spectators on itself ; it captivates them ; and, by the pleasure it imparts, they are led on to view it. So when Jesus is our peace, strength, righteousness, food, salvation, and our all, we are penetrated with a consciousness of it. We should never rest short of this feeling, nor ever think we have it strong enough. This is to keep the faith ; and our chief conflict and most constant labour must be against our own heart, the things of the world, and the suggestions of our great enemy, who are all intent to divert us from this one object, which Mary placed herself before ; or to make us doubt whether in the life and death of Immanuel there were such unsearchable riches and efficacy, such a complete salvation for all his people ; or whether we are in that number. For my own part, I am often tempted to suspect whether I am not speaking great swelling words of Christ, and yet am no more than sounding brass or a tinkling cymbal ; and I find the only successful way of answering this doubt is immediately to address to Jesus a prayer to this effect : " Whosoever cometh to thee,

thou wilt in no wise cast out: Lord, have I not come to thee? Am not I as a brand plucked out of the fire, depending upon thee for life? See if there be any way of wickedness in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

My eye looks to the blessed Jesus, my heart longs to be more in his service; my love, O that it were greater toward him! I mourn deeply for my corruptions, which are many and great. When I look at him, and contemplate his great salvation, I admire, I adore, and in some measure I love; but when I look at myself, my heart rises at the sight—black and devilish, selfish and proud, carnal and covetous, and most abominably unclean, I want all things which are good. But I have a blessed, blessed Lord, Christ Jesus, in whom all fulness dwells for me, and for the dear friend to whom I am writing: a fulness of pardon, wisdom, holiness, strength, peace, righteousness, and salvation: a fulness of love, mercy, goodness, truth. All this, and a thousand times more than all this, without any worthiness or merit, only for receiving. O, blessed free grace of God! O, blessed be his name for Jesus Christ! What a gift! and for whom? For you, my dear friend, if you are without strength, if you are in your nature an enemy, all this is for you. What says the everlasting God? Believe that he gave his Son for sinners, and as a sinner believe in Jesus. He came to save the lost: then, as a lost soul, believe in him. He came to cleanse the filthy: then, as a filthy soul, believe in him. And why should we not thus believe? Can God lie? Impossible. Can we have a better foundation to build on than the promise and oath of God?

My dear friend, I know you will not be angry at my preachment: I aim it all at my own heart; I stand more in need of it than you; and I always feel my heart refreshed when I am talking or thinking of Jesus. It is a feast to my sinful soul, when I am meditating on the glories which compose his blessed name. But, O how dark and ignorant!

how little, how exceeding little, do I know of him! O, thou light of the world, enlighten my soul! Teach me to know more of thy infinite and unsearchable riches, thou great God-man, that I may love thee with an increasing love, and serve thee with an increasing zeal, till thou bringest me to glory!

J. F.

L.—TO THE REV. CHARLES WESLEY.

Tern, Sept. 26, 1760.

You answer me not, my dear sir. Have you not received my last, with a letter enclosed from my Lady Huntingdon? But it is with an ill grace I complain, when I ought rather to thank you for the consolatory letter which you wrote me in answer to my first from Tern. It might have comforted me, if I would or could be comforted without Jesus; but I only ask strength to groan on till I can say, *Totus mihi perplacet Christus*.^{*} Without the experience of this motto, yours will never raise me above a devil, who can say as well as I, *Totus displiceo mihi*.[†]

I send you here the copy of a part of a letter which I have just written to Lady Huntingdon:—

“The light I expected from our friend at Bristol is come, though from a different quarter. A fortnight ago, the minister of this parish, with whom I have had no connexion for these two years, sent me word (I know not why) that his pulpit should be at my service at any time, and seems now very friendly. Some days after I ventured, without design, a visit of civility to the vicar of a neighbouring parish, who fell out with me three years ago, for preaching faith in his church. He received me with the greatest kindness, and said often, he would have me take care of souls some way or other. Last Sunday, the vicar of

* Christ is to me altogether lovely.

† I am altogether hateful to myself.

Madeley, to whom I was formerly curate, coming to pay a visit here, expressed great regard for me, seemed to be quite reconciled, and assured me that he would do all that was in his power to serve me—of which he yesterday gave me a proof, by sending me a testimonial unasked. He was no sooner gone, than news was brought that the old clergyman I mentioned to your ladyship, died suddenly the day before; and that same day, before I heard it, Mr. Hill, meeting at the races his nephew, who is patron of Madeley, told him that if he would present me to Madeley, he would give the vicar of that parish the living vacated by the old clergyman's death. This was immediately agreed to; as Mr. Hill himself informed me in the evening, wishing me joy. This new promise, the manner in which Mr. Hill forced me from London to be here at this time, and the kindness of the three ministers I mentioned, whose hearts seemed to be turned at this juncture to sign my testimonials for institution, are so many orders to be still, and wait till the door is quite open or shut. I beg, therefore, your ladyship would present my respects and thanks to Lady Margaret and Mr. Ingham, and acquaint them with the necessity which these circumstances lay me under to follow the leadings of Providence."

This answer is agreeable to the advice you have so repeatedly given me, not to resist Providence, but to follow its leadings. I am, however, inwardly in suspense: my heart revolts at the idea of being here alone, opposed by my superiors, hated by my neighbours, and despised by all the world. Without piety, without talents, without resolution—how shall I repel the assaults and surmount the obstacles which I foresee, if I discharge my duty at Madeley with fidelity? On the other hand, to reject this presentation, to burn this certificate, and to leave in the desert the sheep whom the Lord has evidently brought me into the world to feed, appears to me nothing but obstinacy and re-

finer self-love. I will hold a middle course between these extremes. I will be wholly passive in the steps I must take, and active in praying the Lord to deliver me from the evil one, and to conduct me in the way he would have me to go.

If you see anything better, inform me of it speedily; and at the same time remember me in all your prayers, that if this matter be not of the Lord, the enmity of the bishop of Lichfield, who must countersign my testimonials, the threats of the chaplain of the bishop of Hereford, who was a witness to my preaching at West-street, the objections drawn from my not being naturalized, or some other obstacle, may prevent the kind intentions of Mr. Hill. Adieu!

I am, &c.,

J. F.

LI.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, *March 10, 1761.*

MY DEAR SIR,—I thank you for your elegy on Dr. M—n. It is pathetic and truly Christian. As I read it, I could not refrain my tears; tears so much the more sweet, as they originated in a secret hope, that I should one day strip off the polluted rags of my own righteousness, and put on the Lord Jesus Christ, like the Christian hero of your poem.

I feel more and more, that I neither abide in Christ, nor Christ in me; nevertheless I do not so feel it as to seek him without intermission. O wretched man that I am; who shall deliver me from this heart of unbelief! Blessed be God, who has promised me this deliverance, through our Lord Jesus Christ!

My new convert has with great difficulty escaped the wiles of the devil; who, by fifty visions, had set her on the pinnacle of the temple. Thanks be to God, she has come down without being cast headlong. I have had more trouble with her visions than with her unbelief. Two other

persons profess that they have received the consolations of divine love : I wait for their fruits.

A few days ago I was violently tempted to quit Madeley. The spirit of Jonah had so seized upon my heart, that I had the insolence to murmur against the Lord ; but the storm is now happily calmed, at least for a season. Alas ! what stubbornness is there in the will of man ; and with what strength does it combat the will of God under the mask of piety, when it can no longer do so. with the uncovered, shameless face of vice ! If a man bridleth not his tongue, all his outward religion is vain. May we not add to this observation of St. James, that if a man bridleth not his will, which is the language of his desires, his inward religion is vain also ? The Lord does not, however, leave me altogether ; and I have often a secret hope, that he will one day touch my heart and my lips with a live coal from the altar ; and that then his word shall consume the stubble, and break to pieces the stone.

The question which you mean to repeat at the end of the winter is, I hope, whether you shall be welcome at Madeley. My answer is, you shall be welcome even before winter ; for I have already lost almost all my reputation, and the little that remains does not deserve a competition with the pleasure I shall have in seeing you. Farewell.

Yours,

J. F.

LII.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, *April* 27, 1761.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have just received your letter, which at once fills me with pleasure and covers me with shame. You kindly cast a veil over my faults, instead of exposing them as they deserve. This generous conduct will, if I am not incorrigible, help to cure me of what you style my “ imprudent simplicity,” but what I call by its proper title of “ stupid ingratitude.” But what do I say ?—nothing can

cure me but a lively faith in that Jesus, who is made to us, of the Father, wisdom. O that he were my wisdom !

When I first came to Madeley, I was greatly mortified and discouraged by the smallness of my congregations ; and I thought that if some of our friends at London had seen my little company, they would have triumphed in their own wisdom ; but now, thank God, things are altered in that respect ; and last Sunday I had the pleasure of seeing some in the church-yard who could not get into the church. I began a few Sundays ago to preach in the afternoon, after catechising the children ; but I do not preach my own sermons. Twice I read a sermon of Archbishop Usher's, and last Sunday one of the homilies, taking the liberty to make some observations on such passages as confirmed what I advanced in the morning ; and by this means I stopped the mouth of many adversaries.

I have frequently had a desire to exhort in Madeley-wood and Coalbrook-dale, two villages of my parish ; but I have not dared to run before I saw an open door. It now, I think, begins to open : two small societies, of about twenty persons, have formed of themselves in those places, although the devil seems determined to overturn all. A young person, the daughter of one of my rich parishioners, has been thrown into despair ; so that everybody thought her insane, and indeed I thought so too. Judge how our adversaries rejoiced : and, for my part, I was tempted to forsake my ministry, and take to my heels : I never suffered such affliction. Last Saturday I humbled myself before the Lord on her account, by fasting and prayer ; and I hope that the Lord has heard my prayer. She found herself well enough to come to church yesterday. You will do well to engage your colliers at Kingswood to pray for their poor brethren at Madeley. May those of Madeley, one day, equal them in faith, as they now do in that wickedness for which they were famous before you went among them.

Mr. Hill has written me a very obliging letter, to engage me to accompany the eldest of my pupils to Switzerland : and if I had any other country than the place where I am, I should perhaps have been tempted to go. At present, however, I have no temptation that way, and I have declined the offer as politely as I could. I am, &c.

J. F.

LIII.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, *Aug. 19, 1761.*

MY DEAR SIR,—I have at length received your letter ; for which I thank you with all my heart. I fear you give yourself up to melancholy, on account of your ill state of health ; or, at least, that you do not rejoice with a joy full of glory, at the remembrance of that glory which Christ has purchased for you. I yet hope that we shall both see the goodness of the Lord in the land of the living, and that his providence will bring our bodies nearer to each other, at the same time that his grace unites our spirits in Christ Jesus.

I do not know whether I mentioned to you a sermon preached at the Archdeacon's visitation. It was almost all levelled at the points which are called the "doctrines of Methodism ;" and as the preacher is minister of a parish near mine, it is probable he had me in his eye. After the sermon, another clergyman addressed me with an air of triumph, and demanded what answer I could make. As several of my parishioners were present, besides the churchwardens, I thought it my duty to take the matter up ; and I have done so by writing a long letter to the preacher, in which I have touched the principal mistakes of his discourse, with as much politeness and freedom as I was able ; but I have as yet had no answer. I could have wished for your advice before I sealed my letter ; but as I could not have it, I have been very cautious, intrenching myself be-

hind the ramparts of Scripture, as well as those of our homilies and articles.

I know not what to say to you of the state of my soul : I daily struggle in the slough of despond, and I endeavour every day to climb the hill difficulty. I need wisdom, mildness, and courage ; and no man has less of them than I. O Jesus, my Saviour, draw me strongly to Him who giveth wisdom to all who ask it, and upbraideth them not ! As to the state of my parish, the prospect is yet discouraging. New scandals succeed those that wear away. But offences must come. Happy shall I be if the offence cometh not by me ! My churchwardens speak of hindering strangers from coming to the church, and of repelling them from the Lord's table ; but on these points I am determined to make head against them. A club of eighty workmen in a neighbouring parish, being offended at their minister, determined to come in procession to my church, and requested me to preach a sermon for them ; but I thought proper to decline it, and have thereby a little regained the good graces of the minister, at least for a time. Farewell.

J. F.

LIV.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, *Oct. 12, 1761.*

MY DEAR SIR,—You have always the goodness to encourage me, and your encouragements are not unseasonable ; for discouragements follow one after another with very little intermission. Those which are of an inward nature are sufficiently known to you ; but some others are peculiar to myself, especially those I have had for eight days past, during Madeley wake. Seeing that I could not suppress these Bacchanals, I did all in my power to moderate their madness ; but my endeavours have had little or no effect. The impotent dike I opposed, only made the torrent swell and foam, without stopping its course. You

cannot well imagine how much the animosity of my parishioners is heightened, and with what boldness it discovers itself against me, because I preached against drunkenness, shows, and bull-baiting. The publicans and maltmen will not forgive me: they think that to preach against drunkenness, and to cut their purse, is the same thing.

My church begins not to be so well filled as it has been; and I account for it by the following reasons: the curiosity of some of my hearers is satisfied, and others are offended by the word; the roads are worse; and if it shall ever please the Lord to pour his Spirit upon us, the time is not yet come; for instead of saying, "Let us go up together to the house of the Lord," they exclaim, "Why should we go and hear a Methodist?" I should lose all patience with my flock, if I had not more reason to be satisfied with them than with myself. My own barrenness furnishes me with excuses for theirs; and I wait the time when God shall give seed to the sower, and increase to the seed sown. In waiting that time I learn the meaning of this prayer, "Thy will be done!" Believe me

Your sincere though unworthy friend,

J. F.

LV.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, *May 16, 1762.*

MY DEAR SIR,—I have received your letter, giving me the melancholy information of your daughter Sukey's death. What shall I say to you on the subject? You know too well the dangers of that world, from which the Lord has recalled her, to repine at the premature felicity into which she has entered. We are yet in the vale of tears and miseries, but God has wiped away all tears from her eyes: let us then dry our eyes as well as we can, and hasten to follow her. I hope that fatigue and grief will not wholly cast down Mrs. Wesley. Salute her from me, and tell her I would,

with all my soul, bear a part of her burden. Why do I say a part? The Lord Jesus is ready to take upon him the whole. Let us go to him, bowed down under the weight of our temporal and spiritual afflictions, and we shall find that rest which he has purchased for us at so great a price. Let us not forget to mingle our thanksgivings with our sighs. "The one shall be taken," saith the Lord, "and the other shall be left." Blessed be his holy name; his mercy still triumphs over his justice!

Since my last our troubles have increased. A young man having put in force the act for suppressing swearing against a parish officer, he stirred up all the other half-gentlemen to remove him from the parish. Here I interposed; and to do so with effect, I took the young man into my service. By God's grace I have been enabled to conduct myself in this matter so as to give them no handle against me, and, in spite of all their cabals, I have got the better.

What has greatly encouraged them is the behaviour of a magistrate, who was at first inclined to favour me, but afterward turned against me with peculiar malevolence, and proceeded so far as to threaten me and all my flock of the Rock church* with imprisonment. Hitherto the Lord has stood by me, and my little difficulties are nothing to me; but I fear I support them rather like a philosopher, than a Christian. We were to have been mobbed with a drum last Tuesday, at the Rock church; but their captain, a papist, behaved himself so very ill that they were ashamed of him, and are made peaceable for the present. Ask of God to give me wisdom, resolution, and love. The Lord give you a prosperous journey. Adieu. I am, &c. J. F.

* The Rock church were a company of well-disposed people, who assembled for hearing the word and prayer, at a small house built upon a rock, in Madeley-wood.

LVI.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, *July*, 1762.

YOUR letter, my dear sir, arrived some days too late to prevent my taking a false step respecting the papists in question. Three weeks ago, I went to Ludlow, to the bishop's visitation, and I thought the occasion favourable for my purpose; but the churchwardens, when we were upon the spot, refused to support me, and the court has paid no regard to my presentation. Thus I have gained some experience, though at my own cost. The sermon did not touch the string with which I was whipped the last visitation, and I afterward had the boldness to go and dine with the bishop.

Many of my parishioners are strangely disconcerted at my bringing my gown back from Ludlow. With respect to the magistrate I mentioned, who, because he acted as judge of the circuit two years ago, believes himself as able a lawyer as Judge Foster, he, for the present, contents himself with threatenings. I met him the other day; and after he had called me "Jesuit," &c., and menaced me with his cane, he assured me again that he would soon put down our assemblies. How ridiculous is this impotent rage!

I have attempted to form a society; and, in spite of much opposition and many difficulties, I hope, by God's grace, to succeed. I preach, I exhort, I pray, &c.; but as yet I seem to have cast the net on the wrong side of the ship. Lord Jesus, come thyself, and furnish me with a divine commission! For some months past I have laboured under an insuperable drowsiness: I could sleep day and night; and the hours which I ought to employ with Christ on the mountain, I spend like Peter in the garden.

I congratulate you on your safe arrival in London.

May the Lord strengthen you in soul and body! may he fill you with wisdom and patience! Certainly, you need much of both, to pull up the tares without rooting up the wheat. I approve of your design of examining the state of things for yourself before you engage in the business. May the Lord bless the productions of your body and those of your mind! may your little family and your books appear in the world under the most distinguished protection of the Most High! Adieu. Pray for me.

I am, &c.

J. F.

LVII.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, *Aug.*, 1762.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have received your last, and I rejoice that Dr. Turner, by whose skill the Lord once brought me up from the grave, has undertaken your cure. May he have the same success with you that he had with me; but, be that as it will, our comfort is to know that God will do all for the best.

I have still trials of all sorts. First, spiritual ones. My heart is hard: I have not that contrition, that filial fear, that sweet, humble melting of heart before the Lord, which I consider as essential to spiritual Christianity.

Secondly, the opposition made to my ministry increases. A young clergyman, who lives in Madeley-wood, where he has great influence, has openly declared war against me, by pasting on the church door a paper, in which he charges me with rebellion, schism, and being a disturber of the public peace. He puts himself at the head of the "gentlemen of the parish," as they term themselves; and, supported by the recorder of Wenlock, he is determined to put in force the conventicle act against me. A few weeks ago, the widow who lives in the Rock church, and a young man who read and prayed in my absence, were

taken up. I attended them before the justice, and the yong clergyman with his troop were present. They called me "Jesuit," &c.; and the justice tried to frighten me by saying that he would put the act in force, though we should assemble only in my own house. I pleaded my cause as well as I could; but seeing he was determined to hear no reason, I told him he must do as he pleased; and that if the act in question concerned us, we were ready to suffer all its rigours. In his rage, he went the next day to Wenlock, and proposed to grant a warrant to have me apprehended; but as the other justices were of opinion that the business did not come under their cognizance, but belonged to the spiritual court, he was obliged to swallow his spittle alone. Mr. Madan, whom I have consulted, tells me the act may be enforced against the mistress of the house, the young man, and all who were present. The churchwardens talk of putting me in the spiritual court, for meeting in houses, &c. But, what is worst of all, three false witnesses offer to prove, upon oath, that I am a liar; and some of my followers (as they are called) have dishonoured their profession, to the great joy of our adversaries.

In the midst of these difficulties, I have reason to bless the Lord that my heart is not troubled. Forget me not in your prayers. Yours, J. F.

LVIII.—TO MR. VAUGHAN.

MADELEY, *Sept. 4, 1762.*

DEAR SIR,—I am very glad to hear your delight is still in the ways of the Lord; and I trust you will never stop till you find them all pleasantness to you. Fight the good fight of faith, break through all temptations, dejections, wandering, worldly thoughts; through all unprofitable companions, and the backwardness of an unbelieving heart

and carnal mind : struggle, I say, until you touch Jesus, and feel healing, comforting virtue, proceeding from him : and when you know clearly the way, repeat the touch, till you find he lives in you by the powerful operation of his loving Spirit. Then you will say with St. Paul, "I live the life of God ; yet not I, but Christ who liveth in me."

I rejoice that you inquire where Christ maketh his flock to rest at noon. The rest from the guilt and power of sin you will find only in inward holiness : and this I apprehend to consist in what St. Paul calls "the kingdom of God :—righteousness," which excludes all guilt ; "peace," which banishes all fear that hath torment ; "and joy," which can no more subsist with doubts, anxiety, and unstableness of mind, than light can subsist with darkness. That there is a state wherein this kingdom is set up, firmly set up in the heart, you may see from our Lord's sermon on the mount, by his priestly prayer in St. John, by the epistle of that apostle, and various parts of the epistles of St. Paul and St. James.

To aim aright at this liberty of the children of God requires a continual acting of faith ; of a naked faith in a naked promise ; such as, "The Son of God was manifested to destroy the works of the devil. The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus hath made me free from the law of sin and death. I can do all things through Christ, who strengtheneth me." By a naked faith in a naked promise I do not mean a bare assent that God is faithful, and that such a promise in the book of God may be fulfilled in me ; but a bold, hearty, steady venturing of my soul, body, and spirit, upon the truth of the promise, with an appropriating act. It is mine, because I am a sinner ; and I am determined to believe, come what will. Here you must shut the eye of carnal reason, and stop the ear of the mind to the reasonings of the serpent ; which, were you to reason with him, would be endless, and would soon draw you out

of the simple way of that faith by which we are both justified and sanctified.

You must also remember that it is your privilege to go to Christ, by such a faith now, and every succeeding moment: and that you are to bring nothing but a careless, distracted, tossed, hardened heart, just such a one as you have now. Here lies the grand mistake of many poor, miserable, but precious souls: they are afraid to believe, lest it should be presumption, because they have not as yet comfort, joy, love, &c.; not considering that this is to look for fruit before the tree is planted. Beware, then, of looking for any grace previous to your believing; and let this be uppermost in your mind.

The Lord make you wise as a serpent, and harmless as the loving dove; but beware of the serpent's food,—dust and the dove's bane,—bird-lime,—worldly cares. O my friend, what is the world? A flying shadow. As we fly through it, let us lose ourselves in the eternal substance. Farewell in the Lord. Yours,

J. F.

LIX.—TO THE REV. CHARLES WESLEY.

MADELEY, Sept. 20, 1762.

MY DEAR SIR,—It is well for me I have not an implicit faith in your half-promises of coming to see me. I am sorry that my delay has furnished you with an apology; but comfort myself still with the idea that you will not wholly deprive me of the pleasure of embracing you, and that your visit is only postponed for a little season.

The "*Crede quod habes et habes*,"* is not very different from those words of Christ, "What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them." Mark xi, 24. The humble reason of the believer, and the irrational presumption of the enthusiast,

* Believe that you have it, and you have it.

draw this doctrine to the right hand or to the left. But to split the hair, here lies the difficulty. I have told you that I am no party-man; I am neither for nor against the witness for Christian perfection without examination. I complain of those who deceive themselves; I honour those who do honour to their profession; and I wish we could find out the right way of reconciling the most profound humility with the most lively hopes of grace. I think you insist on the one, and Maxfield on the other; and I believe you both sincere in your views. God bless you both; and if either of you goes too far, may the Lord bring you back!

Truly, you are a pleasant casuist. What! "It hath pleased thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into thy holy church." Does all this signify nothing more than "being taken into the visible church?"

How came you to think of my going to leave Madeley? I have indeed had my scruples about the above passage, and some in the burial-service; but you may dismiss your fears, and be assured I will neither marry, nor leave my church, without advising with you. Adieu.

Your affectionate brother,

J. F.

LX.—TO MISS HATTON.

MADELEY, Nov. 1, 1762.

MADAM,—I thank you for the confidence you repose in the advice of a poor fellow-sinner: may the Father of lights direct you through so vile an instrument! If you build all your hopes of heaven upon Jesus Christ, in all his offices, you do not build without a foundation, but upon the true one.

That there is a seal of pardon and an earnest of our in-

heritance above, which you are as yet a stranger to, seems clear from the tenor of your letter ; but had I been in the place of the gentleman you mention, I would have endeavoured to lay it before you “as the fruit of faith,” and a most glorious privilege, rather than “as the root of faith,” and a thing absolutely necessary to the being of it.

I believe many people know when they receive faith, and all people when they receive the seal of their pardon. When they “believe in Christ,” they are justified in the sight of God ; and when they “are sealed by the Spirit,” they are fully assured of that justification in their own conscience. Some receive faith and the seal of their pardon in the same instant, as the jailer, &c. ; but most receive faith first, as the dying thief, the woman of Canaan, David, the people of Samaria, (Acts viii, 12–16,) and the faithful at Ephesus, (Eph. i, 13.) Suppose, then, God gave you faith, that is, a hearty trust in the blood of Christ, and a sincere closing with him as your righteousness and your all, while you received the sacrament, (which seems to me very probable by the account you give me,) your way is exceeding plain before you. Hold fast your confidence, but do not trust nor rest in it : trust in Christ, and remember he says, “I am the way ;” not for you to stop, but to run on in him. Rejoice to hear that there is a full assurance of faith to be obtained by the seal of God’s Spirit ; and go on, from faith to faith, until you are possessed of it. But remember this, and let this double advice prevent your straying to the right or left : First. That you will have reason to suspect the sincerity of your zeal, if you lie down easy without the seal of your pardon and the full assurance of your faith. Secondly. While you wait for that seal in all the means of grace, beware of being unthankful for the least degree of faith and confidence in Jesus ; beware of burying one talent, because you have not five ; beware of despising the grain of mustard-seed, because it is not yet a tree.

May the Lord teach you the middle path, between resting short of the happiness of "making your calling and election sure," and supposing you are neither called nor chosen, and that God hath not yet truly begun the good work. You can never be too bold in believing, provided you aspire still after new degrees of faith, and do not use your faith "as a cloak for sin." The Lord despises not the day of small things; only beware of resting in small things, and look for the seal and abiding witness of God's Spirit, according to the following direction:—

" Restless, resign'd, for this I wait,
For this my vehement soul stands still."

As to deep sights of the evil of sin, the more you go on, the more you will see Christ exceeding lovely, and sin exceeding sinful: therefore, look up to Jesus, as a vile and helpless sinner, pleading his promises: this is going on; and trust him for the rest.

With respect to myself: in many conflicts and troubles of soul, I have consulted many masters of the spiritual life; but divine mercy did not, does not, suffer me to rest upon the word of a fellow-creature. The best advices have often increased my perplexities; and the end was, to make me cease from human dependence, and wait upon God from the dust of self-despair. To him, therefore, I desire to point you and myself, in the person of Jesus Christ. This incarnate God receives weary, perplexed sinners still, and gives them solid rest. He teaches, as no man ever taught; his words have spirit and life; nor can he possibly mistake our case. I am, madam, your fellow-servant in the patience and kingdom of Jesus.

J. F.

LXI.—TO THE REV. CHARLES WESLEY.

MADELEY, *Nov. 22, 1762.*

MY DEAR SIR,—The debates about the illegality of exhorting in houses, although only in my own parish, grew some time ago to such a height, that I was obliged to lay my reasons before the bishop ; but his lordship very prudently sends me no answer. I think he knows not how to disapprove, and yet dares not approve, this Methodistical way of procedure.

Brother Ley arrived safe here yesterday, and confirms the melancholy news of many of our brethren overshooting sober and steady Christianity in London. I feel a great deal for you and the church, in these critical circumstances. O that I could stand in the gap ! O that I could, by sacrificing myself, shut this immense abyss of enthusiasm, which opens its mouth among us !

The corruption of the best things is always the worst of corruptions. Going into an extreme of this nature, or only winking at it, will give an eternal sanction to the vile aspersions cast on all sides on the purest doctrines of Christianity ; and we shall sadly overthrow—overthrow in the worst manner—what we have endeavoured to build for many years.

The nearer the parts that mortify are to the heart, the more speedily is an amputation to be resolved upon. You will say, perhaps, “But what if the heart itself is attacked ?” Then let the heart be plucked out, as well as the right eye. Was not Abraham’s heart bound up in the life of Isaac ? Yet he believed, that if he offered him up, God was able to restore him, even from the dead ; and was not God better to him than his hopes ?

I have a particular regard for M—— and B——. Both of them are my correspondents. I am strongly prejudiced

in favour of the witnesses, and do not willingly receive what is said against them; but allowing that what is reported is one-half mere exaggeration, the tenth part of the rest shows that spiritual pride, presumption, arrogance, stubbornness, party spirit, uncharitableness, prophetic mistakes, in short, that every sinew of enthusiasm is now at work in many of that body. I do not credit any one's bare word, but I ground my sentiments on B——'s own letters.

May I presume, unasked, to lay before you my mite of observation. If I had it in my power to overlook the matter, as you have, would it be wrong in me calmly to sit down with some unprejudiced friends and lovers of both parties, and fix with them the marks and symptoms of enthusiasm; then insist, at first in love, and afterward, if necessary, with all the weight of my authority, upon those who have them, or plead for them, either to stand to the sober rule of Christianity, or openly to depart from us.

Fear not, dear sir, the Lord will take care of the ark; and though hundreds of Uzzahs should fall off, most of them would return with Noah's dove. Have faith in the word, and leave the rest to Providence. "The Lord will provide," is a comfortable motto for a believer.

I am, with most hearty prayers that God would fill you more than ever with wisdom, steadiness, meekness, and fortitude; reverend and dear sir, &c.,

J. F.

LXII.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, *Jan. 5, 1763.*

MY DEAR SIR,—I congratulate you on the strength the Lord gave you last year, and I beseech him to supply the lamp of your days with new oil, during the course of that upon which we are now entering. Above all, may he fill the vessel of your heart with the oil of gladness, and prepare you for all events which time may bring forth. May

he enable you to carry the light of his glorious gospel into the hearts of thousands by your writings and sermons, and wisdom and grace into mine by your letters and conversation.

My soul does not experience a new life in this renovation of the year. O may the Almighty enable me to conclude it in a better spirit than I have begun it! What I want is the light and mighty power of the Spirit of my God. Happy should I be if, in the midst of all my pressing wants, I had the power and the will constantly to cast my burdens at the feet of the Lord. As to my parish, we are just where we were; we look for our pentecost, but we do not pray sufficiently to obtain it. We are left in tolerable quiet by all but the sergeant, who sent a constable to make inquiry concerning the life of his majesty's subjects, upon information that the cry of "murder" had been heard in my house on Christmas-day. This report originated in the cries of a young woman, who is of our society, and whom Satan has bound for some months.

It seems to me as if that old murderer proposed to ruin the success of my ministry at Madeley, as he did at London, in the French church, by means of Miss A——d. She emaciates her body by fastings, falls into convulsions, sometimes in the church, and sometimes in our private assemblies, and is perpetually tempted to suicide; her constitution is considerably weakened, as well as her understanding. What to do in this case, I do not know; for those who are tempted in this manner pay as little regard to reason as the miserable people in Bedlam. Prayer and fasting are our only resources. We propose to represent our case to the Lord on Tuesday next, and on all the following Tuesdays. Aid the weakness of our prayers with all the power of yours. Adieu. That the Lord may strengthen you and yours, in body and soul, is the earnest prayer of

Yours, &c.

J. F.

LXIII.—TO MISS HATTON.

MADELEY, *Jan. 28, 1763.*

DEAR MADAM,—I share in the joy which your deliverance from your late trials gives to those who shared in your perplexity. Heaviness may endure for a night, but gladness cometh in the morning; and when it comes after a long, uneasy night, it is doubly welcome, and deserves a double tribute of praises. O be not wanting in that sweet duty!—I mean, praising from a sense of the divine goodness, love, and patience toward us. Remember that you are brought from darkness to light, to show forth the praises of Him who calleth you; and that your feet are set at liberty for you to run with patience the race of prayer and praise, self-denial and obedience, which the Lord hath set before you.

Would you go on comfortably and steadily for the time to come, beg of the Lord to give you grace to receive the following advice:—1. Live above earthly and creature comforts. 2. Beware of flatness and lukewarmness: this, if not carried immediately to the Lord, ends often in darkness and deadness. 3. Value divine comforts above all things, and prize Christ above all comforts, that if they should fail, you may still glory in the God of your salvation. 4. Let that which torments others make your happiness—I mean self-denial, and renouncing your own will. 5. Be ready to yield with joy to every conviction of the spirit of God. 6. Be faithful to present grace, and aspire after a continual growth. 7. Live the present moment to God, and avoid perplexing yourself about your past or future experience: by giving up yourself to Christ as you are, and being willing to receive him now as he is, leaving all the rest to him, you will cut up a thousand temptations by the roots.

I am, &c.,

J. F.

LXIV.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, *March 14, 1763.*

DEAR MADAM,—I am very glad you persist in taking up your cross, and following the Captain of our salvation. You must expect many a difficulty : some of your greatest trials may come from your dearest friends without, and your nearest part within. I always found it profitable to expect the worst ; for a temptation foreseen is half overcome. Let us count the cost daily, and learn to value all outward things as dung and dross, that we may win Christ.

My heart is at present full of an advice which I have just given, with some success, to the Israelites in the wilderness about this place. Spend, in “feeling after Christ, by the prayer of such faith as you have, whether it be dark or luminous, the time you have hitherto spent in desponding thoughts, in perplexing considerations upon the badness or uncertainty of your state ; and come now to the Lord Jesus with your present wants, daring to believe that he waits to be gracious to you.” Christ is the way, the highway to the Father ; and a highway is as free for a sickly beggar as a glorious prince. If it is suggested, that “you are too presumptuous to intrude without ceremony upon Him that is glorious in holiness, and fearful in praises ;” answer, in looking up to Jesus,—

“Be it,—I myself deceive ;
Yet I must, I must believe.”

Mr. M—d—’s reply to Mr. Wesley’s answer seems to me just in some points, and in others too severe. Mr. Wesley is, perhaps, too tenacious of some expressions, and too prone to credit what he wishes concerning some mistaken witnesses of the state of fathers in Christ. Mr. M——, perhaps, esteems too little the inestimable privilege of being perfected in that love which casts out fear : but, in general, I con-

ceive, if I do not presume of myself in answering your question, that it would be better for babes or young men in Christ to cry for a growth in grace, than to dispute whether fathers in Christ enjoy such or such privileges.

I am, with sincerity, &c.,

J. F.

LXV.—TO MR. SAMUEL HATTON.

MADELEY, *April 22, 1763.*

DEAR SIR,—I am glad to find by your welcome letter that Jesus is still precious to you. O may he be so a hundred-fold more, both to me and you! May we live only to show forth his praise, and grow up into him in all things!

As for me, I have reason to praise God that he gives me patience to throw in my weak line, till he gives me the word, and enables me to cast the net on the right side, and enclose a multitude of sinners. The hope of this bears me up above the toils of a night of ignorance, perplexity, and trials of every sort. I find, blessed be God, that all things work together for my good, whether it be success or want of success, joy or grief, sickness or ease, bad or good report: all encourages, all humbles me.

With respect to the Misses Hatton, I hope they will call no man upon earth “master,” and that they will steer clear of the rocks of prejudice and bigotry, against which so many professors split daily, even when they think they are at the greatest distance from them.

I am quite of your opinion about the mischief that some professors (puffed up in their own fleshly minds) do in the Church of Christ under the mask of sanctity; but my Master bids me bear with the tares until the harvest, lest in rooting them up I should promiscuously pull up the wheat also. As to Mr. Wesley’s system of perfection, it tends rather to promote humility than pride, if I may credit his description of it in the following lines:—

“Now let me gain perfection’s height;
Now let me into nothing fall:
Be less than nothing in thy sight,
And feel that Christ is all in all.”

More than this I do not desire; and I hope that short of this nothing will satisfy either my dear friend or me.

With respect to “one Mr. B——n having been so bold as to assert in your room, that our salvation was conditional,” he may be orthodox enough, in my poor judgment, although he said so. Indeed, the meritorious part of our salvation is unconditional on our side; and if Mr. B——n talks of meritorious conditions, he is a stranger to the gospel; but, that the application of this salvation is conditional, I gather from every doctrinal chapter in the Bible, especially from Luke xiii, 3, and Mark xvi, 16.

Have you drunk in the doctrine of particular redemption, contrary to the thoughts of your esteemed friend, Count Zinzendorf? But, be that as it will, let us still make the best of our way to the Saviour, and drop all our particular opinions in his universal, unbounded love; and whereinsoever any of us is wrong, the Lord will reveal it unto us. Pray for my flock; and pray for, dear sir,

Your sincere friend and affectionate brother in Christ,
J. F.

LXVI.—TO THE REV. CHARLES WESLEY.

MADELEY, *July* 26, 1763.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have for two months waited impatiently for some news of you, but in vain. Are you alive, paralytic, gouty, slothful, or too busy to write a line to your friends at Madeley? If you have not leisure to write a line, write a word, “I am well,” or, “I am ill.” God grant it may be the former!

Everything is pretty quiet here now. Many of our offences die away; though, not long ago, I had trials in

abundance : but, blessed be the Lord, he gave me his peace. It is not, however, without fighting that I keep it. One of my late trials might have had consequences to make me quit Madeley : and, I praise God, I am ready to do so without looking behind me, even this day. The young person I mentioned, as being sorely tempted of the devil, is happily delivered ; and we have had the testimonies of Mr. Mould, who preached here three weeks ago, and of Mr. R——, who spent four days here, and preached last Sunday. He is an excellent young man, and only wants a little of the Methodist zeal to temper the reserve of Mr. W——.

When will you come to Madeley ? What do you do at London ? Have you repaired the breach, and healed the plague ? May the Lord give you all the wisdom, the patience, the zeal, the gentleness, and the health you stand in need of ! Ask them for

Your poor brother,

J. F.

LXVII.--TO MISS HATTON.

MADELEY, *Aug. 3, 1763.*

MADAM,—I am heartily glad to find, by the contents of your letter, that your heart is more set upon obtaining the one thing needful,—Christ in us, with all his graces, the hope of glory. I beg, in my Master's name, you would cherish the conviction of the need of this prize of your high calling, and pursue it in the new and living way in which the fathers trod—that of the cross, and that of faith. We travel in the first, by continually denying self, in the desire of the flesh, the desire of the eye, and the pride of life ; and we advance in the second, by aiming at Christ, claiming Christ, embracing Christ, delighting and rejoicing in Christ received in the heart, through the channel of the gospel promises. To be able to go on in the way of the

cross, and that of faith, you stand in need, madam, of much recollection, and steady watchfulness over the workings of your own heart, and diligent attention to the whispers of divine grace. That the Lord would powerfully enable us to run on with faith and patience till we inherit the promises, is the prayer of, madam,

Your servant in Christ,

J. F.

LXVIII.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, *Aug.* 19, 1763.

MADAM,—Mrs. Hatton gave me this morning your serious letter. You wisely observe therein, the continual need professing Christians have to guard against religious chit-chat, and conclude by requesting a few lines, when I should have an opportunity of writing: but as there is nothing in your letter which requires an answer, I was thinking whether I could answer it without being guilty of religious chit-chat; for as there is such a thing in speaking, no doubt in writing also. I believe I should have sacrificed to conscience what the world calls “good manners,” had I not just after accidentally opened Lopez’s *Life* upon the following passage, which I shall transcribe, hoping it will be blessed both to the reader and copier.—“He was as sparing of words in writing, as in speaking. He never wrote first to any one, nor did he answer others, but when necessity or charity obliged him to it, and then so precisely, and in so few words, that nothing could be retrenched. I have several of his letters in my hands of five or six lines each. In answer to those he had received from the Viceroy of Mexico, he sent him one containing only these words: ‘I will do what you command me.’ And although this manner of writing might seem disrespectful to persons of so high quality, yet it gave no offence

from one who was so far from all compliments, and who never spoke anything superfluous."

Now, madam, for fear of writing anything superfluous, I shall conclude by wishing that both you and I may follow Lopez as he followed Christ; and subscribing myself, madam,

The ready servant of you and yours in the gospel,

J. F.

LXIX.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, ———.

MY DEAR FRIEND IN THE LORD,—I thought last Sunday that you were not far from the kingdom of God. Had your wisdom stooped a little more to the foolishness of the cross, you would have been the little child to whom God reveals what he justly hides from the wise and prudent. I longed to follow you, and give you no rest till you had drunk the cup of blessing, which your Lord hath mixed for you with his bitter tears and most precious blood. And how glad was I to find last night, that you had no aversion to Jesus and his love, nor to the simple, foolish way of entertaining him in your heart, as you can, by mere faith. How often since has my heart danced for joy, in hope that the time is come that the Lord will fully open your heart, like that of Lydia, to attend, without cavilling or objecting, to his still small voice, "I am thine, and thou art mine! Fear not, for I have redeemed thee, thou worm Jacob. I have graven thy name, that is, 'sinner,' upon the palms of my hands. I shall see in thee the travail of my soul, and be satisfied. Let me not upbraid thee longer for wilful unbelief and hardness of heart; but believe, upon the testimony of my word and servants, that I am risen for thy justification. Say not, I must ascend into heaven, or descend into the deep,—I must feel first such a height of joy or depth of sorrow: no; believe simply that the word is

nigh thee, in thy mouth and in thy heart, namely, the word of faith preached unto thee. I am the Lamb of God; I have carried away thy sins, and I do not condemn thee, though thou condemnest thyself. I am he that, for mine own sake, blotteth out thy sins as a cloud, and thy iniquities as a thick cloud; because 'I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy;' namely, on him who will be saved in my way; by that which stumbles the Jew, and is foolishness to the Greek, but which will prove to thee both the wisdom and power of God. Fear not, then, 'O thou of little faith; wherefore shouldst thou doubt' any longer? Do I despise the day of small things? Do I break the bruised reed, or quench the smoking flax? Am not I the good Shepherd, who carrieth the lambs in his bosom? Does a mother forget her sucking child, because it is weak, sickly, unable to walk, or even to stand? Yea, though a mother should so forsake her child, yet will I never leave thee nor forsake thee. Only lean on thy Beloved, and I will bring thee up out of the wilderness. Abandon thyself wholly to my care, and I, the Keeper of Israel, will care for thee; and thy business shall be henceforth to repose on my bosom, and wash thee in my bleeding heart; and my business shall be to carry thee safe through or above all thy enemies. Only remember, thy business is to believe and love; and trust me for a faithful discharge of mine,—to save thee with a high hand."

Thus, my friend, will your blessed Saviour speak to your heart, if you do not drown his voice by the objections of your false wisdom. O, down with it! it is the fruit of the tree of death. Away to the tree of life; take freely, eat and live. I know you are willing, through grace; and Christ, who hath made you willing, is ten thousand times more willing than you: how then can he cast you out? What hinders but that you should, as a spiritual Rebekah, say, "Now and ever I will have that

man?" You go upon a sure bottom, you need not fear being slighted; for in the letter he hath written you from heaven, to invite you to the marriage, he says, "I have betrothed thee to me with everlasting," yea, with bleeding kindness. Indeed, indeed, he sends me to you, to assure you he is "the same yesterday, to-day, and forever;" and were you the sister of Magdalene in outward wickedness, he sends you word that you may kiss his feet, and rejoice that much is forgiven you, even though you should not have one tear to wash them with; his blood, his precious blood, hath washed his feet, and does wash your heart, and will wash it white as snow. O let it be your business to consider it with a believing thought: that is the way to apply it to your heart.

I would have called on you this morning, had not my intended journey prevented it. Till I have an opportunity of calling, I beg, as upon my knees, you would make use of the following directions, which I think as truly applicable to your state, as they are truly evangelical:—

1. It is better perishing for believing wrong, than for not believing at all. Venture then with Esther: "If I perish, I perish." I had rather perish in trying to touch the sceptre of grace, than in indolently waiting till the king touches me with it.

2. Christ often reveals himself "as a babe, a feeble infant, crying for milk in a manger." Do not you despise him in his lowest, weakest state; do not say to your Saviour, "I will not receive thee, unless thou appear in a blaze of glorious light." Reject not the little leaven; and if your grain of faith is small as mustard-seed, be the more careful not to throw it away as dirt. The Holy Ghost says, "The light of the just shines more and more to the perfect day;" and how feeble is the light of the early morning! how undiscernible from darkness!

3. Sin gives you your first title to the Friend of sinners ; and a simple naked faith the second. Do not, then, puzzle yourself about contrition, faithfulness, love, joy, power over sin, and a thousand such things, which the tempting devil will persuade you you must bring to Christ. He will receive you gladly with the greatest mountain of sin ; and the smallest grain of faith at Christ's feet will remove that mountain.

4. At the peril of your soul, desire at present neither peace nor joy ; nor puzzle yourself even about love. Only desire that that blessed Man may be your bridegroom, and that you may firmly believe that he is so, because he hath given you his flesh and blood upon the cross ; and keep believing this, and trusting in him.

5. You have nothing to do with sin and self, although they will have much to do with you. Your business is with Jesus, with his free, unmerited love, with his glorious promises, &c., &c.

6. Strongly expect no good from your own heart ; expect nothing but unbelief, hardness, unfaithfulness, and backsliding : and when you find them there, be not shaken nor discomposed ; rather rejoice that you are to live by faith on the faithful heart of Christ ; and cast not away your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward.

7. When you are dull and heavy, as you will often be, remember to live on Christ, and claim him the more by naked faith. I have not time to say more ; but Jesus, whom you hold by the hem of his promise, will teach you all the day long. Look unto him, and be saved ; and remember that he forgives seventy times seven in one day. May his dawning love attend you till it is noon-day in your soul ; and pray for him who earnestly prays for you, I mean for

Your unworthy servant,

J. F.

LXX.—TO MRS. GLYNNE.

MADELEY, *Sept. 2, 1763.*

DEAR MADAM,—I thank you for your kind remembrance, and good wishes that I might eat the everlasting bread of our Father's house, expressed by a present of the most incorruptible bread our earth affords. I should be glad to take the opportunity of Mr. Wesley's stay at Salop, to thank you in person, and eat with you the bread, the unleavened bread, of sincerity and truth, handed out by him; but I am obliged to set out to-day for lady Huntingdon's college, and shall not, I fear, be in Shropshire when Mr. Wesley comes.

If the Father of lights hath drawn your soul in any warmer desires after the glorious sense of his love, and enabled you to sit down and count the cost, and give up fully whatever may have a tendency to keep you out of the delightful enjoyment of the pearl of great price, I shall rejoice greatly; for it is my hearty desire that all my Christian friends and I might grow up daily toward the measure of the full stature of Christ.

I return you my most affectionate thanks, madam, for your book, and for the franks you added to it. May you use all the promises of the gospel as franks from Jesus, to send momentary petitions to heaven; and may an unwearyed faith be the diligent messenger!

What proved a disappointment to you was none to me, having been forced, by many such disappointments, to look for comfort in nothing but these comprehensive words: "Thy will be done." A few more trials will convince you experimentally of the heavenly balm they contain to sweeten the pains and heal the wounds that crosses and afflictions may cause. We often improve more by one hour's resignation, than by a month's reading; and when

we can exercise neither gifts nor graces, one of the last is always excepted,—patience: which is then worth all the rest. O let us make the best of our day, madam; a day of grace; a gospel day; a day of health; a precious day of life! Let us believe, hope, love, obey, repent, spend and be spent for Him who hath loved us unto death!

Mr. M. said your portmanteau would go to-day; but whether it goes or stays, let neither wind nor tide keep us back from Jesus Christ. That his love may fill our hearts, is the repeated wish of, dear madam,

Your unworthy friend and servant in Christ, J. F.

LXXI.—TO THE REV. CHARLES WESLEY.

MADELEY, *Sept. 9, 1763.*

MY DEAR SIR,—I see that we ought to learn continually to cast our burdens on the Lord, who alone can bear them without fatigue and pain. If M—— returns, the Lord may correct his errors, and give him so to insist on the fruits of faith as to prevent antinomianism. I believe him sincere; and, though obstinate and suspicious, I am persuaded that he has a true desire to know the will and live the life of God. I reply in the same words you quoted to me in one of your letters, “Do not be afraid of a wreck, for Jesus is in the ship.” After the most violent storm, the Lord will, perhaps, all at once, bring our ship into the desired haven.

You ask me a very singular question with respect to women: I shall, however, answer it with a smile, as I suppose you asked it. You might have remarked that for some days before I set off for Madeley, I considered matrimony with a different eye from what I had done; and the person who then presented herself to my imagination, was Miss Bosanquet. Her image pursued me for some hours the last day, and that so warmly, that I should perhaps have

lost my peace, if a suspicion of the truth of Juvenal's proverb, "*Veniunt a dote sagittæ*," had not made me blush, fight, and fly to Jesus, who delivered me, at the same moment, from her image and the idea of marriage. Since that time, I have been more than ever on my guard against admitting the idea of matrimony; sometimes by the consideration of the love of Jesus, which ought to be my whole felicity; and at others, by the following reflections:—

It is true, the Scripture says that a good wife is a gift of the Lord; and it is also true, that there may be one in a thousand: but who would put in a lottery where are nine hundred and ninety-nine blanks to one prize. And suppose I could discover this phoenix, this woman of a thousand, what should I gain by it? A distressing refusal. How could she choose such a man as I? If, notwithstanding all my self-love, I am compelled cordially to despise myself, could I be so wanting in generosity, as to expect another to do that for me which I cannot do for myself,—to engage to love, to esteem, and honour me?

I will throw on my paper some reflections which the last paragraphs of your letter gave rise to, and I beg you will weigh them with me in the balances of the sanctuary.

REASONS FOR AND AGAINST MATRIMONY.

<p>1. A tender friendship is, after the love of Christ, the greatest felicity of life, and a happy marriage is nothing but such a friendship between two persons of different sexes.</p>	<p>1. Death will shortly end all particular friendships. The happier the state of marriage, the more afflicting is widowhood: besides, we may try a friend, and reject him after trial; but we cannot know a wife till it is too late to part with her.</p>
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<p>2. A wife might deliver</p>	<p>2. Marriage brings after it</p>
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me from the difficulties of a hundred cares and expenses ; children, a family, &c.

3. Some objections and scandals may be avoided by marriage. 3. If matrimony is not happy, it is the most fertile source of scandals.

4. A pious and zealous wife might be as useful as myself; nay, she might be much more so among my female parishioners, who greatly want an inspectress. 4. I have a thousand to one to fear that a wife, instead of being a help, may be indolent, and, consequently, useless; or humoursome, haughty, capricious, and consequently a heavy curse.

Farewell. Yours,

J. F.

LXXII.—TO THE REV. MR. SELLON.

MADELEY, Oct. 7, 1769.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I thank you for your letter and books; they came safe to hand, and I shall give you the amount at the first opportunity. I have inquired what the Calvinists think of them, but I do not hear much about it. They choose rather to be silent; a sign that they have not any great thing to object. Mr. R. looked at one here in my house, and objected to *Ελεησω ον αν ελεω*, Rom. ix, 15. He says *ελεω* is, “I have mercy,” not, “I should have mercy.” I observed to Mr. Glascott, “It is the subjunctive mood, and may take the sign, should, would, or could, according to the analogy of faith.”

I long to see Cole answered. My request to you is, that you would answer him in the cool manner you have the synod; and my prayer to God is, that you may be assisted for that important work.

I know two strong Calvinist believers, who lately took their leave of this world with, “I shall be damned!” O what did all their professions of perseverance do for them?

They left them in the lurch. May we have the power of God in our souls, and we shall readily leave unknown decrees to others!

The Lord give you patience with your brethren. The best way to confound them is, to preach that kingdom of God which they cast away, with real righteousness, and present peace and joy in believing: that is poison to the synodical kingdom.

I despair of seeing you before I have seen Switzerland, which I design to visit next winter. Mr. Ireland takes me as far as Lyons in my way.

There are some disputes in L. H. college; but when the power of God comes they drop them. The Calvinists are three to one. Your book I have sent them, as a hard nut for them to crack.

May the Lord spare you, and make you a free, joyful soldier of the Lord Jesus; as tough against sin and unbelief as you are against Calvin and the synod. The Lord hath overruled your leaving S. for good. Let us trust in him, and all will be well. Farewell.

J. F.

LXXIII.—TO MR. VAUGHAN.

DEAR SIR,—As you desire me to tell you simply what I think of the state of your soul, as described in your letter, I will do it as the Lord shall enable me.

I praise him that he has begun a good work in you, which I make no doubt he will finish, if you do not counteract the operations of his grace. Your having sometimes free access to the throne of grace, but soon falling back into deadness and darkness, is the common experience of many who walk sincerely, though slowly, toward Zion. It argues, on one side, the drawings of faith; and, on the other, the power of unbelief. I would compare such souls to the child of the patriarch, who came to the birth, nay,

saw the light of this world, and yet returned again into his mother's womb, until, after a greater struggle, he broke through all that was in his way, and left the place where he had been so long in prison.

If you fall short, yet be not cast down; on the contrary, rejoice that God has begun, and will finish, his work in you; and strive more earnestly to enter in at the strait gate. Watch more unto prayer, and pray for that faith which enables the believer now to lay hold on eternal life. Remember, however, that your prayers will not avail much, unless you deny yourself, and take up every cross which the Lord suffers men, devils, or your own heart to lay upon you. In the name of Jesus, and in the power of his might, break through all; and you will find daily more and more that Jesus is the light of the world, and that he who follows him shall not walk in darkness. The peace of Jesus be with you! Farewell.

Yours, &c.,

J. F.

LXXIV.—TO MISS HATTON.

MADELEY, *March 5, 1764.*

YOU seem, madam, not to have a clear idea of the happiness of the love of Jesus, or at least of your privilege of loving him again. Your dulness in private prayer arises from the want of familiar friendship with Jesus. To obviate it, go to your closet as if you were going to meet the dearest friend you ever had: cast yourself immediately at his feet, bemoan your coldness before him, extol his love to you, and let your heart break with a desire to love him, till it actually melts with his love. Be you, if not the importunate widow, at least the importunate virgin, and get your Lord to avenge you of your adversary: I mean your cold heart.

You ask me some directions to get a mortified spirit. In order to get it, get recollection.

Recollection is a dwelling within ourselves ; a being abstracted from the creature, and turned toward God.

Recollection is both outward and inward. Outward recollection consists in silence from all idle and superfluous words ; and in solitude, or a wise disentanglement from the world, keeping to our own business, observing and following the order of God for ourselves, and shutting the ear against all curious and unprofitable matters. Inward recollection consists in shutting the door of the senses, in a deep attention to the presence of God, and in a continual care of entertaining holy thoughts, for fear of spiritual idleness.

Through the power of the Spirit, let this recollection be steady even in the midst of hurrying business ; let it be calm and peaceable ; and let it be lasting. "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."

To maintain this recollection, beware of engaging too deeply, and beyond what is necessary, in outward things ; beware of suffering your affections to be entangled by worldly desire, your imagination to amuse itself with unprofitable objects, and indulging yourself in the commission of what are called "small faults."

For want of continuing in a recollected frame all the day, our times of prayer are frequently dry and useless, imagination prevails, and the heart wanders : whereas we pass easily from recollection to delightful prayer. Without this spirit, there can be no useful self-denial, nor can we know ourselves : but where it dwells, it makes the soul all eye, all ear ; traces and discovers sin, repels its first assaults, or crushes it in its earliest risings.

In recollection let your mind act according to the drawings of grace, and it will probably lead you either to contemplate Jesus as crucified, and interceding for you, &c., or to watch your senses and suppress your passions, to keep before God in respectful silence of heart, and to watch and follow the motions of grace, and feed on the promises.

But take care here, to be more taken up with the thoughts of God than of yourself; and consider how hardly recollection is sometimes obtained, and how easily it is lost. Use no forced labour to raise a particular frame, nor tire, fret, nor grow impatient if you have no comfort; but meekly acquiesce and confess yourself unworthy of it; lie prostrate in humble submission before God, and patiently wait for the smiles of Jesus.

May the following motives stir you up to the pursuit of recollection:—1. We must forsake all, and die to all, first by recollection. 2. Without it God's voice cannot be heard in the soul. 3. It is the altar on which we must offer up our Isaacs. 4. It is instrumentally a ladder (if I may be allowed the expression) to descend into God. 5. By it the soul gets to its centre, out of which it cannot rest. 6. Man's soul is the temple of God; recollection the holy of holies. 7. As the wicked by recollection find hell in their hearts, so faithful souls find heaven. 8. Without recollection, all means of grace are useless, or make but a light and transitory impression.

If we would be recollected we must expect to suffer. Sometimes God does not speak immediately to the heart: we must then continue to listen with a more humble silence. Sometimes assaults of the heart or of the tempter may follow, together with weariness and a desire to turn the mind to something else: here we must be patient; by patience unwearied we inherit the promises.

Dissipated souls are severely punished. If any man abide not in Christ, he is cast out as a branch; cast out of the light of God's countenance into the drudgery of the senses. He dries up, and a barrenness follows in the use of the means. The world and Satan gather and use him for their service. He is cast into the fire of the passions, of guilt, of temptation, and perhaps of hell.

As dissipation always meets its punishment, so recollec-

tion never fails of its reward. After patient waiting, comes communion with God, and the sweet sense of his peace and love. Recollection is a castle, an inviolable fortress against the world and the devil: it renders all times and places alike, and is the habitation where Christ and his bride dwell.

I give you these hints, not to set Christ aside, but that you may, according to the light and power given to you, take these stones and place them upon the chief cornerstone, and cement them with the blood of Jesus, until the superstructure, in some measure, answers to the excellence of the foundation. I beg an interest in your prayers for myself, and those committed to my charge; and am, with sincerity, madam, your servant, for Christ's sake,

J. F.

LXXV.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, *Sept. 3, 1764.*

MADAM,—I think the state your soul is in is not uncommon. The only advice I can at present give you is, not to look to self, except it be to believe it away. Be generously determined not to live easy without the thought of Jesus on your mind, and his love, or, at least, endeavours after it, in your heart. Then get that love, or the increase of it, by obstinately believing the love of Christ to you, till you are ashamed into some return of it. A passage I have found much relief from, when my soul hath been in the state you describe, is, "Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God, through Jesus Christ our Lord." (Rom. vi, 11.) This reckoning by faith, I find, is not reckoning without one's host; but Christ is always ready to set his hand to the bill which faith draws.

With respect to the hindrances your worldly business lays in the way of your soul, I would have you persuaded that they are by no means insurmountable. The following

means, in due subordination to faith in Jesus, may, by the blessing of God, be of service to you :—

1. Get up early, and save time, before you go to business, to put on the “whole armour of God,” by close meditation and earnest prayer.

2. Consider the temptation that most easily besets you, whether it be hurry, or vanity, or lightness, or want of recollection to do what you do as unto God. Ponder the consequences of those sins, see your weakness to resist them, and get at any rate a more feeling sense of your helplessness : when you have it, you will naturally watch unto prayer, and look to Christ for strength from moment to moment.

3. When your mind hath been drawn aside, do not fret, or let yourself go down the stream of nature, as if it were in vain to attempt to swim against it ; but confess your fault, and calmly resume your former endeavour, but with more humility and watchfulness.

4. Steal from business now and then, though for two or three minutes only, and in the corner where you can be least observed, pour out your soul in confession, or a short ejaculation at the feet of Jesus, for power to watch, and to believe that he can keep you watching. May you feelingly believe, that he hath bought the power for you, and then of a truth you will find it done to you according to your faith.

As to your correspondent's letter, I approve its contents, but would have no one depend on my judgment, especially on the points it treats of ; as I have been thought, sometimes, to consider them with a mind prepossessed in their behalf. This I know, that all cannot, ought not to receive some of the sayings that letter contains ; and yet happier far, in my opinion, are those that can and do receive them. Let every one follow grace and providence, and we shall be guided aright. I am, &c.,

J. F.

LXXVI.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, *Dec.*, 1764.

MADAM,—I am sensible how much I want advice in a thousand particulars, and how incapable I am safely to direct any one: I shall, nevertheless, venture to throw upon this sheet the following observations as they came to my mind on the reading your letter.

You cannot expect on the gospel plan to attain to such a carriage as will please all you converse with. The Son of God, the original of all human perfection, was blamed sometimes for his silence, and sometimes for his speaking, &c.; and shall the handmaid be above her Master?

There is no sin in wearing such things as you have by you, if they are not out of character: I mean, if they are necessary for your station, and characterize your rank.

There is no sin in allowing yourself a little more latitude of speech, provided you listen to Christ by inward attention to his teaching, and the end of what you say may be to introduce what is useful and edifying; for God judgeth of words according to the intention of the speaker. I may speak idly even in the pulpit; and I may speak to edification in the market, if what I say is either necessary or proper to introduce or drive the nail of a profitable truth. Some parables of our Lord would have been deemed idle talk, had it not been for the end he pursued, and, upon the whole, accomplished by them. No particular rule can be given here; a thousand circumstances of persons, tempers, places, times, states, &c., will necessarily vary a Christian's plan.

There is no sin in looking cheerful. No; it is our duty to be cheerful: "Rejoice evermore." And if it is our duty always to be filled with joy, it is our duty to appear what we are in reality. I hope, however, your friends know how to distinguish between cheerfulness and levity.

If you want to recommend religion to those you converse with, and, in many instances, to pluck up offence by the root, let your heart lie where Mary's body did. Keep close to Jesus, be attentive to his still, small voice, and he will fill you with humble love; and such love will teach you, without any rule, as by the instinct of your new nature, "to become all things to all men."

You ask what the apostle meant by that expression. It is certain he did not mean to overset his own precept, "Be not conformed to the world." I apprehend that, in every case wherein we might promote the spiritual or temporal good of any one, by doing or suffering things of an indifferent nature, or even painful and disagreeable to us, we ought to be ready to become all things to all, provided the good we propose is superior to the inconveniences to which we submit. Here also we stand in need of humble love and meek wisdom, that we may so weigh circumstances as to form a right judgment in all things.

I am glad the Lord strips you: I wish self may never clothe you again. Beware of stiff singularity in things barely indifferent: it is self in disguise; and it is so much the more dangerous, as it comes recommended by a serious, self-denying, religious appearance.

I hope the short-comings of some about you will not prevent your eying the prize of a glorious conformity to our blessed Head. It is to be feared that not a few of those who talk of having attained it have mistaken the way: they are still something; and I apprehend that an important step toward that conformity is to become nothing; or, rather, with St. Paul, to become in our own eyes the chief of sinners and the least of saints.

Mr. Harris seems to me one among ten thousand. He has left a particular blessing behind him in this place. The God of peace give us the blessings that the Messenger and the Mediator of the New Covenant brought with him

at this time into the world ! May we so receive him that, by a blessed exchange, as he was clad with our flesh, so we may put him on, and be covered with his righteousness, and filled with his Spirit ! Salute the church in your house. From your servant in the gospel,

J. F.

LXXVII.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, *Jan. 31, 1765.*

MADAM,—You “strive, pray, resist, but are little the better ;” yet pray, strive, and resist on. It is good to be tried, and to get a blessing in the very fire. We shall then know how to value it properly. But let me be free with you, madam. Do you pray, resist, and strive against wanderings with any steadiness, and do you do it in cheerful hope to overcome through the blood of the Lamb ? When you have been unhinged from Christ in mind or heart, do you, with stronger indignation against wanderings, a calmer expectation of the assistance of the Spirit, and a deeper agony of faith, seek to be avenged of your adversary ? Do you imitate the importunate widow ? If this be the case, you will not complain long ; for whatsoever we thus ask in the name of Christ, we shall surely receive ; and should the Lord, for reasons best known to himself, try your faith and hope, yet that longer trial will be found to praise and honour in the end. Only faint not ; and when you find yourself inclined to do so, in all haste fly to the cordial of the promises, and determine to take nothing else, till your heart is revived and made strong again.

The same power of God, through praying faith, is necessary to keep you from reasoning unprofitably. Whenever this arises to any height, there is one thing wanting—a steadily exerted will never thus to reason. We cannot be so easily betrayed, or slide away into this snare of the devil so easily as into the other. I apprehend that whosoever

abides steadily purposed not to reason, shall not do it. The will starts aside first, the resolution of course followeth, and the tempter easily takes their place. Get willing, truly willing, under the cross; and keep there, to keep your will in continual subjection to the will of God.

Last Sunday I preached two sermons upon Heb. xi, 1. I see so much in that faith of the apostle, that I can hardly pray for anything besides that "evidence of things not seen, that substance of things hoped for." To how many mistakes and fatal errors have we opened the door by varying from the apostle, and pretending to be wiser than the Holy Ghost! The Lord fill you and yours with that faith! Farewell.

J. F.

LXXVIII.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, *June 2, 1765.*

MADAM,—I thank you for the letter of your correspondent. What he says about luminous joy may sometimes be the case in some of God's children; but I apprehend that God's design in withholding from them those gracious influences which work upon and melt the sensitive, affectionate part of the soul, is to put us more upon using the nobler powers—the understanding and the will. These are always more in the reach of a child of God, while the others greatly depend upon the texture of the animal frame; and if they are not stirred in a natural way, the Spirit of God can alone, without our concurrence in general, excite them. Do you believe, love, take up your cross, and run after Jesus?

You must let friends and foes talk about your dress, while you mind only Jesus, his word, and your own conscience. You talk of hearing me soon. I dare never invite any one to hear me, though I am glad to see my friends; but now I can invite you with pleasure to come and hear a preacher who, under God, will make you amends

for the trouble of a journey to Madeley. His name is M——. He may possibly stay a Sunday or two more with me; but Jesus has promised to be always with his poor followers. To his merciful hands I commend both you and your unworthy friend,

J. F.

LXXIX.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, *Aug. 8, 1765.*

MADAM,—Mr. Mather and I have considered your objections to our little confession of faith: be pleased to take the following short answers:—

I. We do not forget that God works all good in all men: this is clearly implied in our first article. But we do not believe that his working is generally irresistible, or that it supersedes our being workers together with him.

II. Can any one work out his salvation by a faith productive of sanctification, and yet neglect good works? Impossible!

III. Obdurate sinners, if their day of grace is not over, have always power to believe some legal truths at least, and to renounce some abominations in consequence of that belief: if they resist the Spirit here, what wonder that he does not proceed any farther? Convictions of sin, as well as of righteousness, are not always so strong as to carry all before them. As the dew falls more frequently on the earth than hard showers; so more gentle, less observable, and more gradual droppings of grace descend upon earthly hearts, more frequently than driving storms of fear, or strong transports of love. Their effects may be as gracious, though less forcible, and God hath all the glory of the one as well as of the other.

IV. Can convinced sinners, under the sound of “the gospel, believe with the heart?” &c. Through the power of God, always more or less present, they can believe with the heart those truths which are “suited to their wants, and

properly proposed to them." If they cannot, why does God call upon them to believe, and send them word they shall be damned if they do not? (Mark xvi, 16.) As to your query, "Does not God sometimes delay to confer the power to believe, for a trial of the grace of conviction?" we answer, that we see no such thing in the New Testament, and that the assertion seems to be a piece of human wisdom. Why were not the convictions of the harlot, of the three thousand, the five thousand, the jailer, and others, tried by a refusal of the gift of faith? If, therefore, persons truly convinced of sin do not believe to the comfort of their souls, we apprehend the reason to be, their being kept in the dark as to the gospel way of salvation, their confounding faith and its fruits, their disregarding the one talent, and despising the little leaven, and the faith which is small as a grain of mustard-seed: in short, their rejecting an inward Christ, because he does not make his appearance at first as a mighty, glorious conqueror, but as a weak, naked, crying babe, who wants both milk and swaddling-clothes for his present sustenance.

"It is granted, that convinced people should be pressed to make an effort to believe, not doubting of the Lord's concurrence with their attempt." Here, we apprehend, you grant us what we contend for; it being absurd to make any attempt toward what is totally impossible. If such people ought to attempt to believe now, and not to doubt of the Lord's concurrence with their attempt, it follows, that either you press them not to doubt of a lie, or that the Lord now helps them to believe, if they will accept his help in the manner and way it is offered.

We cannot conceive what ingredient more you would require to make faith, than, on the one side, the promise of God, and the gracious help of his Spirit; and, on the other, genuine conviction, and an humble attempt to cast ourselves on the fidelity, mercy, and power of the Lord.

Indeed, you insinuate that God's concurrence may not be granted now. "Perhaps not now," are your words; but not those of Ananias, who said to convinced Saul, "Arise! why tarriest thou? wash away thy sins, calling," or believing, "on the name of the Lord." If God does not concur now to help convinced sinners to believe, we still affirm that they cannot, without great cruelty, be called upon now to attempt an utter impossibility, or, if we may use your expression, "to touch heaven with their hand." This proviso of yours, this "perhaps not now," seems the common way of clogging and mangling the gospel. We see nothing of it in Holy Writ; there we read, "Believe, and thou shalt be saved: fear not, only believe," &c. We never read, "Believe, but perhaps not now: only believe, but first wait God's time; he does not, perhaps, choose thou shouldst believe now." There is the quintessence of the poison of the old serpent in the supposition that God commands now, but is not, perhaps, willing that we should obey him now. Believe, perhaps not now. Repent, be chaste, be honest, be sober, be charitable, perhaps not now. Good God! What room will this "not now" leave for present infidelity, uncleanness, drunkenness, injustice, &c., and every imaginable abomination!

Upon second thoughts, we would hope that your "perhaps not now," does not regard our believing, but God's bringing forth the top-stone, while we shout, "Grace unto it;" and in this sense we find faith and hope are often tried; yea, to the uttermost. Isaac was not born immediately on God's making the promise, or Abraham's believing it. A joy unspeakable and full of glory does not always immediately accompany the belief of the promise of forgiveness of sin, and of deliverance from its dominion. "Have ye received the Holy Ghost since ye believed? After that ye believed, ye were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise. Now the God of hope fill you with all joy

and peace in believing," &c. This was the language of St. Paul, and we dare not confound what he distinguishes; namely, "believing, and tasting all the rich fruits of faith." Concerning some of these, which faith does not in general immediately produce, we allow you to say, "perhaps not now;" but "though they tarry, yet wait for them, for they will surely come."

"Restless, resign'd, for these I wait,
For these my vehement soul stands still."

But observe: 1. That this earnest, patient waiting, is one of the blessed fruits of faith, and not something previous to it, as you seem to imagine. 2. That we do not suppose it necessary for those who are truly convinced of sin, and desire to be justified freely by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Christ, to wait at all before they believe that "he is made unto them of God righteousness," for the present pardon of their sin; nor for those who are truly weary of their carnal mind, to wait before they believe that "he is made unto them of God sanctification," for the present destruction of it; for the promise is even now to us and to our children, (those that are afar off not excepted,) if they lay hold of it by faith. But greater discoveries, riper fruits, richer tastes, fuller enjoyments of these blessings, together with a being more strengthened, established, and settled in them, is what we esteem our privilege to expect and wait for, in the manner you describe.

V. You seem to suspect that this faith, on the one hand, leads to Antinomianism, and on the other takes from God the glory of our salvation.

As to the first suspicion, we hope it is obviated in our second and fourth answers, it being impossible that a faith consequent upon real conviction and weariness of sin, and begotten by the pure gospel word, through the Spirit,—a faith which leads to sanctification and the destruction of

the carnal mind,—a faith which is productive of all the ripest fruits of the Spirit,—can be merely notional, or have the least tendency to Antinomianism.

And as to the second, we detest the thought of having the least share in the glory of Christ as our only Redeemer, and of the Spirit as our only Sanctifier. We abhor it as much as the proud and mad conceit of sharing with God the glory of our Creator and Preserver. We constantly ascribe to free grace all the honour of man's salvation, and are persuaded, that from the first half-formed desire raised in the heart, and the least degree of power given for the improvement of it, to the final victory over our last enemy, all is of grace, of mere grace. But as we may give God all the glory of our creation and preservation, without supposing that he must breathe, eat, drink, rest, dress, plough, and reap for us; so we apprehend that we may give Christ all the glory of our redemption and salvation without excusing ourselves from the performance of what he enjoins, and of his own free, undeserved grace, gives us both will and power to do.

I rejoice that your soul prospers: you need not look back any more. When you are tempted to hurry and inward impatience, remember you are not obliged to give way to it. Take up these little crosses patiently, by believing, looking inward, and finding Jesus in the midst of business. "He is here, he is here, as my all," will break many, yea, ten thousand snares. May the peace of God be with you and yours! Farewell.

J. F.

LXXX.—TO MR. ALEXANDER MATHER.

MY DEAR BROTHER,—I thank you for your last favour. If I answered not your former letter, it was because I was in expectation of seeing you, and not from the least disregard.

I am glad you enjoy peace at Wellington, and I hope you will do so at the Trench when you go there. My reasons for stepping there myself were not to seize upon the spot first, (as the accuser of the brethren may have insinuated,) but to fulfil a promise I made to the people of visiting them, if they would not countenance a lying wretch who went to them from the Bank: all this was previous to my knowledge of the invitation they gave you. I desire you will call there as often as you have opportunity. An occasional exhortation from you or your companion, at the Bank, Dale, &c., will be esteemed a favour; and I hope that my stepping, as Providence directs, to any of your places, (leaving to you the management of the societies,) will be deemed no encroachment. In short, we need not make two parties. I know but one heaven below, and that is Jesus's love: let us both go and abide in it; and when we have gathered as many as we can to go with us, too many will stay behind.

I find there are in the ministry, as in the common experience of Christians, times which may be compared to winter: no great stir is made in the world of grace besides that of storms and offences, and the growth of the trees of the Lord is not showy; but when the tender buds of brotherly and redeeming love begin to fill, spring is at hand. The Lord give us harvest after seed-time. Let us wait for fruit as the husbandman, and remember, that he who believes does not make haste. The love of Christ be with us all. Pray for

J. F.

LXXXI.—TO MISS HATTON.

MADELEY, *Jan. 13, 1766.*

MADAM,—I am almost ashamed of answering your letters after my long delays ; but better late than never ; as I hope your indulgence will put the best construction on what time does not allow me to make an apology for.

I do not wonder if &c., hath been a snare to entangle your thoughts ; but it is now over ; and what is that to thee ? follow thou Christ. You may, however, learn this lesson, that the minding Christ and our own souls, with Mary, while we leave the world to Martha, is no easy thing in a day of temptation ; and that no one knows what he is till he is tried, and tried in the tenderest points,—love, liberty, esteem, and sharp bodily pain. Lord, prepare us for such trials, and may we encounter them in the whole armour of God !

This evening I have buried one of the warmest opposers of my ministry, a stout, strong young man, aged twenty-four years. About three months ago, he came to the church-yard with a corpse, but refused to come into the church. When the burial was over, I went to him, and mildly expostulated with him. His constant answer was, “that he had bound himself never to come to church while I was there ;” adding, “that he would take the consequences ; &c. Seeing I got nothing, I left him, saying, with uncommon warmth, (though, as far as I can remember, without the least touch of resentment,) “I am clear of your blood ; henceforth it is upon your own head : you will not come to church upon your legs ; prepare to come upon your neighbours’ shoulders.” He wasted from that time ; and, to my great surprise, hath been buried on the spot where we were when the conversation passed between us. When I visited him in his sickness, he seemed tame as a wolf in a

trap. O may God have turned him into a sheep in his last hours!

This last year is the worst I have had here,—barren in convictions, fruitful in backslidings. May this prove for us, and for you, the acceptable year of the Lord! I beg your prayers on this behalf.

I have filled my page, but not with Jesus's name; let your heart contain what my letter wants,—Jesus, and his precious blood; Jesus, and his free, glorious salvation. Live to him, breathe for him; buy, sell, eat, drink, read, write for him. Receive him as yours altogether, and give him your whole self, with all that is around you. Take us all, Lord, into thy gracious favour, stamp us with thy glorious image, and conduct us to thy eternal kingdom!

Present my Christian respects to Mrs. Hatton, your sister, and all your friends; and accept the same from

Your unworthy brother,

J. F.

LXXXII.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, *May*, 1766.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am sorry, after the manner of men, that you are ill, but glad in the spirit that the will of God takes place in you; and that he purges you, that you may bring forth more fruit. Now is the time for you to begin to be a Christian in good earnest; I mean, “to follow the Man of sorrows;” and to do it as a lamb who goes to the slaughter, and opens not his mouth by way of complaint; though, as a Christian, I apprehend you may and ought to open it by way of praise.

One advice I will venture to give you, or rather, to transcribe for you, out of Isaiah: “The believer does not make haste” to doubt, to hurry, to forecast, and to reason after the manner of men:—“If I am a child of God, why

am not I thus and thus?" Let Christ, either suffering for you, or ordering your sufferings, be so eyed, that you may in a manner forget and lose yourself in him; or if a weak and pained body makes you think of wretched self, let it be to lay it down with composure at Jesus's feet, or to take up the burden of the cross with cheerful resignation. I hope to hear soon of your being recovered in body, and strengthened in soul by this affliction.

"Is any prayer acceptable to God, which is not the dictate of his holy Spirit?" If you mean by "the dictate of the Spirit," his influence on the mind, to show us our wants, and upon the heart, to make us desire a supply of them, I answer, "No;" for a prayer which hath not, at least, the above-mentioned qualities, is only a vain babbling.

"Does a believer always pray with the Spirit's assistance?" Yes, when he prays as a believer, and not as a parrot: for, at his lowest times, he has, more or less, a sight of his wants, and a desire to have them supplied; and this he could not have, did not the Spirit work upon his mind and heart.

I hope you sink inwardly into nothing, and through nothing into the immensity of God. I see a little, through mercy, into the beauty of humiliation; I find the ministry of condemnation glorious; and I love to take every moment the curse out of Moses's hand, as well as the blessing out of Christ's. The Lord grant that you and I, and all our friends, may do it more feelingly and constantly every hour.

May the Physician of soul and body refresh, strengthen, establish, and thoroughly heal you, by the virtue of his blood, and the word of his power! Bear well, and farewell.

Your unworthy servant,

J. F.

LXXXIII.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, *May 27, 1766.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am glad to hear that the God of all mercy and grace has raised you from the bed of sickness, where his love had confined you. It is good to see his works in the deep, and then to come and sing his praises in the land of the living. A touch of pain or sickness, I find always profitable to me, as it rivets on my soul the thoughts of my nothingness, helplessness, and mortality, and shows me, in a clearer light, the vanity of all the transitory scenes of life. May your afflictions have the same effect upon you, as long as you live! May you be more steadfast than I am, to retain the deep impressions which God's gracious rod may have left upon your soul; and may you learn to lay yourself out more for the Lord, and to do "whatsoever your hand findeth to do, with all your might;" knowing that "there is no wisdom nor device in the grave, whither we are going."

If a sparrow falleth not to the ground, nor a hair from our head, without our heavenly Father's leave, it is certain that the higher circumstances of our life are planned by the wise and gracious Governor of all things. This kind of faith in Providence I find of indispensable necessity to go calmly through life, and I think, too, through death also.

The coming of Mr. Wesley's preachers into my parish gives me no uneasiness; as I am sensible that everybody does better, and, of course, is more acceptable than myself. I should be sorry to deprive any one of a blessing; and I rejoice that the work of God goes on, by any instrument, or in any place. How far it might have been expedient to have postponed preaching regularly in my parish till the minister of —— had been reconciled to the invasion of his; and how far this might have made my way smoother; I do

not pretend to determine. Time will show it; and, in the mean while, I find it good to have faith in Providence.

I fear I have left as great a stink at Bath as Mr. Brown has a sweet savour here. Everything is good to me that shows me my unprofitableness more and more; but I desire to grieve that the good of my private humiliation is so much overbalanced by the loss of many about me. The Lord fill you with all peace and joy in your soul, and with all strength and health in your body. My respects wait upon your mother and sister, and all friends. Farewell.

J. F.

LXXXIV.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, *June 21, 1766.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am much concerned to hear by Mrs. Power, that you are so weak; but my concern has greatly increased since I was told that the foundation of your illness was laid at Madeley, and, I am afraid, by my imprudence, in taking you to the woman with whom we received the sacrament. I ask God's pardon and yours for it; and I hope it will be a means of humbling me, and making me more tender of my friends.

The advice you give me about my health is seasonable. I hope to follow it; nor am I conscious that I have neglected it at all: however, I will endeavour that there be not so much as the shadow of a call for repeating it.

If the air at Wem does not agree with you, could you not come as far as Madeley? The remedy is often most successfully applied where the wound was given; and though I am no nurse, though I have been the contrary of one to you, I hope we should wait upon you with more tenderness than when you were here last. Mrs. Power would nurse you, and I would talk to you of the love of Jesus as well as I could.

You know that I perceived your bodily weakness when

you were here, and charged you with what you charge me—a neglect of your body. If I was right, I hope you will follow yourself the advice you give me. I am sure you will: the burnt child will dread the fire for the time to come.

With regard to kneeling, you must consider what your body can bear, without inconvenience to your health. To recover that is your outward calling now: therefore, so split the hair between the indolence of nature and the weakness of your body, that neither of the two may be increased.

Offer yourself to God for life or death, for ease or pain, for strength or weakness. Let him choose and refuse for you; only do you choose him for your present and eternal portion. I want you to be a little bolder in venturing upon the bosom of our Lord. We lose (I for one) much sweetness, and many degrees of holiness, in being shy of the Friend, the loving Friend of sinners. Pray, for God's sake, do not forget that your Physician is your husband. The joy of the Lord, as well as his peace, is to be your strength. Love is a passion that wants to be stirred: do it in all calmness,—“I will love him, I do love him a little, I shall love him much, because he has first loved me,” &c. Ply, I pray you, this sweet gospel task. Accustom yourself to look upon your body as the temple of the Holy Ghost, and meet him in your heart by simple recollection, and a steady belief of these gospel truths, “He is here, he is in me,” &c.; nor do you let them go for anything you do feel, or you do not feel. May God bless, comfort, establish, and raise you! Farewell.

J. F.

LXXXV.—TO MISS IRELAND.

MADELEY, *July* —, 1766.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—The poor account your father has brought us of your health, and his apprehensions of not seeing you any more, before that solemn day when all people, nations, and tongues shall stand together at the bar of God, make me venture (together with my love to you) to send you a few lines ; and my earnest prayer to God is, that they may be blessed to your soul.

First, then, my dear friend, let me beseech you not to flatter yourself with the hopes of living long here on earth. These hopes fill us with worldly thoughts, and make us backward to prepare for our change. I would not, for the world, entertain such thoughts about myself. I have now in my parish a young man who has been these two years under the surgeons' hand. Since they have given him up, which is about two months ago, he has fled to the Lord, and found in him that saving health which surpasses a thousand times that which the surgeons flattered him with ; and he now longs to "depart and be with Christ, which is far better." To see the bridge of life cut off behind us, and to have done with all the thoughts of repairing it, to go back into the world, has a natural tendency to make us venture forward to the foot of the cross.

Secondly. Consider, my dear, how good the Lord is, to call you to be transplanted into a better world, before you have taken deeper root in this sinful world : and if it is hard to nature to die now, how much harder do you think it would be, if you lived to be the mother of a family, and to cleave to earth by the ties of many new relations, schemes of gain, or prospects of happiness !

Thirdly. Reflect, by your illness, the Lord, who forecasts for us, intimates, long life would not be for his glory, nor

your happiness. I believe he takes many young people from the evil to come, and out of the way of those temptations or misfortunes which would have made them miserable in time and in eternity.

Fourthly. Your earthly father loves you much ; witness the hundreds of miles he has gone for the bare prospect of your health : but, my dear, your heavenly Father loves you a thousand times better ; and he is all wisdom, as well as all goodness. Allow, then, such a loving, gracious Father to choose for you ; and if he choose death, acquiesce, and say as you can, “ Good is the will of the Lord : his choice must be best ! ”

Fifthly. Weigh the sinfulness of sin, both original and actual, and firmly believe “ the wages of sin is death.” This will make you patiently accept the punishment ; especially if you consider that Jesus Christ, by dying for us, has taken away the sting of death, and turned the grave into a passage to a blessed eternity.

Sixthly. Try, my dear, to get nearer to the gracious Redeemer. “ He hath delivered us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us.” (Gal. iii, 13.) He hath quenched the wrath of God in his atoning blood. By his atoning blood, by his harmless life and painful death, he has magnified the law, and satisfied all the demands of divine justice ; by his resurrection he asserted the full discharge of all our spiritual debts ; by his ascension into heaven, where he is gone to prepare us a place, he has opened a way to endless glory. By his powerful intercession, and the merits of his blood, which plead continually for us, he keeps that way open ; and, to encourage us, he assures us, “ He is the way, the truth, and the life, and that he who comes to him, he will in no wise cast out.” He mildly offers rest to the heavy laden, pardon to the guilty, strength to the feeble, and life to the dead. You know his words, “ I am the resurrection and the life ; he that believeth on me, though he

were dead, yet shall he live ; and he that liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

Seventhly. When you have considered your lost state as a sinner by nature, together with the greatness, the fulness, the freeness, and suitableness of Christ's salvation ; and when you have diligently viewed the glories and charms of his person, believe in him. Without any ceremony, choose him for your Physician, your Husband, and your King. Be not afraid to venture upon and trust in him ; cast yourself on him in frequent acts of reliance, and stay your soul on him by means of his promises. Pray much for faith, and be not afraid of accepting, using, and thanking God for a little. The smoking flax he will not quench ; only pray hard that he would blow it up into a blaze of light and love.

Eighthly. Beware of impatience, repining, and peevishness, which are the sins of sick people. Be gentle, easy to be pleased, and resigned as the bleeding Lamb of God. Wrong tempers indulged grieve, if they do not quench the Spirit.

Ninthly. Do not repine at being in a strange country, far from your friends : and, if your going to France does not answer the end proposed to your body, it will answer a spiritual end to your soul. God suffers the broken reeds of your acquaintance to be out of your reach, that you may not catch at them ; and that you may, at once, cast your lonesome soul on the bosom of Him who fills heaven and earth.

Tenthly. In praying, reading, hearing any person read, and meditating, do not consult feeble, fainting, weary flesh and blood ; for at this rate, death may find you idle and supine, instead of striving to enter in at the strait gate : and when your spirits and vigour fail, remember that the Lord is the strength of your life, and your portion forever. "O death, where is thy sting ? Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory, through Jesus Christ our Lord !"

Many pray hard for you, that you may acquit yourself, living or dying, in ease or in pain, as a wise virgin, and as a good soldier of Jesus Christ ; but above all, Jesus, the Captain of your salvation, and the High Priest of your profession, intercedes mightily for you. Look to him and be saved, even from the ends of France. To his pity, love, and power, I recommend you. May he bless you, my dear friend ; lift up the light of his countenance upon you, and give you peace and courage, repentance, faith, hope, and patient love, both now and ever more ! I am your affectionate, sincere friend, and servant in Jesus.

J. F.

LXXXVI.—TO JAMES IRELAND, ESQ.

MADELEY, *July* —, 1766.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—Your absence made me postpone thanking you for all the kindness you showed me when at Bristol : and, to lay me under still greater obligations, you have sent me a hamper full of wine, and broadcloth ; as if it were not enough to adorn and cover the outside, but you must also warm and nourish the inside of the body.

To this you have added a kind but melancholy letter from Dover. Melancholy, I say, as well as kind, by the account it gives of the worldliness of our Protestant brethren abroad, and of the little hope you have of seeing your daughter again. My reason for not answering it immediately was the hope of sending by some friends going to Bristol ; and now I have the opportunity of telling you, without further delay, that you should have a little mercy on your friends, in not loading them with such burdens of beneficence. How would you like to be loaded with kindness you could not return ? Were it not for a little of that grace which makes us not only willing, but happy to be nothing, to be obliged and dependent, your present would make me quite miserable. But the mountains of divine mercy, which press

down my soul, have inured me to bear the hills of brotherly kindness.

I submit to be clothed and nourished by you, as your servants are, without having the happiness of serving you. To yield to this, is as hard to friendship, as to submit to be saved by free grace without one scrap of our own righteousness. However, we are allowed, both in religion and friendship, to ease ourselves by thanks and prayers till we have an opportunity of doing it by actions. I thank you, then, my dear friend, and pray to God that you may receive his benefits as I do yours. Your broadcloth can lap round me two or three times; but the mantle of divine love, the precious fine robe of Jesus's righteousness, can cover your soul a thousand times. The cloth, fine and good as it is, will not keep out a hard shower; but that garment of salvation will keep out even a shower of brimstone and fire. Your cloth will wear out, but that fine linen, "the righteousness of the saints," will appear with a finer lustre the more it is worn. The moth may fret your present, or the tailor may spoil it in cutting; but the present which Jesus has made you, is out of reach of the spoiler, and ready for present wear: nor is there any fear of cutting it out wrong; for it is seamless, woven from the top throughout, with the white, unbroken warp of thirty-three years' perfect obedience, and the red weft of his agony and sufferings unto death.

Now, my dear friend, let me beseech you to accept of this heavenly present, as I accept of your earthly one. I did not send you one farthing to purchase it; it came unsought, unasked, unexpected, as the Seed of the woman; and it came just as I was sending a tailor to buy me some cloth for a new coat; immediately I stopped him; and I hope when you next see me it will be in your present. Now, let Jesus see you in his. Walk in white, adorn his gospel, while he beautifies you with the garment of salvation. Ac-

cept it freely ; wear no more the old rusty coat of nature and self-righteousness ; send no more to have it patched ;* make your boast of an unbought suit, and love to wear the livery of Jesus. You will then love to do his work ; it will be your meat and drink to do it : and that you may be vigorous in doing it, as I shall take a little of your wine for my stomach's sake, take you a good deal of the wine of the kingdom for your soul's sake. Every promise of the gospel is a bottle, a cask, that has a spring within, and can never be drawn out. But draw the cork of unbelief, and drink abundantly, O beloved, nor be afraid of intoxication ; and if an inflammation follow, it will only be that of divine love.

I beg you will be more free with the heavenly wine, than I have been with the earthly which you sent me. I have not tasted it yet ; but whose fault is it ? Not yours, certainly, but mine. If you do not drink daily spiritual health and vigour out of the cup of salvation, whose fault is it ? Not Jesus's, but yours ; for he gives you his righteousness to cover your nakedness, and the consolations of his Spirit to cheer and invigorate your soul. Accept and use. Wear, drink, and live to God. That you may heartily and constantly do this, is my sincere prayer for you and yours, especially your poor daughter, whom I trust you have resigned into the hands of Him to whom she is nearer than to you. The wise Disposer of all things knows what is best for her. The hairs of her head, much more the days of her life, are all numbered. The Lord often destroys the body, that the soul may be saved : and, if this is the case here, as one may reasonably hope, you will not say unto the Lord, "What doest thou?" but say, with the father who lost two sons in one day, "It is the Lord, let him

* Mr. Fletcher's generous friend had kindly requested him not to send his coat to be patched : hence this ingenious and affectionate reply.

do whatsoever he pleaseth;" or, with him who lost ten children at one stroke, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; and blessed be the name of the Lord."

Adieu,

J. F.

LXXXVII.—TO MISS HATTON.

MADELEY, *July 17, 1766.*

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—I want to hear of you, if I cannot hear from you by a line. The last account I had of your state of health was a very poor one. What hath the Lord done for your body since?

My dear friend, we are all going the way of all flesh, and though you are more sensible of the journey in your body than I am at present, yet I follow you, or perhaps you follow me. I often feel a desire to bear your load for you; but the impossibility of this makes me rejoice that Jesus, who does not faint as I might do, will and does carry both you and your burden. By a firm, unshaken faith, you know, we cast our souls upon Jesus; and by that power whereby he is able to subdue all things to himself, he receives and bears that which we commit to him.

That this faith may be the firmer on our part, let it be rational as well as affectionate; affectionate as well as rational. God is good: he does not want us to take his word without proof. What expectation of the Messiah from the beginning of the world! What amazing chains of miracles and wonders were wrought in favour of that people and family from which he was to come! What prophecies fulfilled! that we might rationally believe. What displays of the Godhead in that heavenly man Christ Jesus! In him dwelt, of a truth, "the fulness of the Godhead bodily." You see the power of God in his miracles; the goodness of God in his character; the justice and mercy of God in his death; the truth, and faithfulness, and glory

of God in his resurrection, in the coming of his Spirit, and the preaching of his everlasting gospel. O my friend, we may believe rationally: we may with calm attention view the emptiness of all other religions, and the fulness of assurance that ours affords. And shall we not believe affectionately also? Let us stir up ourselves to love this Jesus, who hath given himself to us, with all his blood, all his grace, and all his glory. Come, give him your whole soul, my dear friend; and take him, with all his pardons, all his love, all his strength. If he wants you to embrace him in his faint, bloody sweat, or in his racking tortures on the cross, draw not back; love him, love him: and let not the grave frighten you; it is good to drop our clay in his quiet sepulchre, and to follow him on the wings of faith and love, without a clog of sickly flesh, to heaven.

“He died for us, and rose again, that whether we live or die, we might be together with him. To us to live is Christ, and to die is gain. He hath blotted out”——

I am happily interrupted by your kind letter. Blessed be God for the prospect of recovery you mention! All is well that Jesus does. Sick or well, living or dying, we will be Jesus's.

With regard to your complaint of slothfulness, your body cannot bear the strong exertions of a wrestling faith, therefore you are called, I apprehend, with a calm consent to accept of the gospel tidings, and, with the quietness of a child at the breast, to suck the milk of divine consolation. Inward, loving, believing recollection and resignation is the path into which our heavenly Friend wants now to lead you. Be faithful, be bold to follow where he leads: make no words, no unbelieving words, and all will be well.

Farewell in body and soul.

J. F.

LXXXVIII.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, *July 28, 1766.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I hear still a very indifferent account of your health. I stand in doubt as to your bodily life: but it is in the hand of Jesus; and Jesus is wise, Jesus is good, Jesus is almighty. He will therefore dispose of you for the best. While you see the scales hovering, and it may be that of life slowly descending toward a quiet grave, calmly look at Jesus; and when the feebleness of your spirits prevents you from crying out, in ecstatic love, “My Lord, and my God!” let your devoted, resigned, patient heart still whisper, “Thy will be done!”

Your last letter raised my hopes of your recovery. Mr. Perry, who saw you since, damps them again; but “whether we live, we live unto the Lord; or whether we die, we die unto the Lord.” Not for works of righteousness that we have done, but according to his mercy he saveth us. Glory be to God for his unspeakable gift! Jesus remembers you in his all-prevailing intercession; and, I might add, I do in my prayers, if the weight of a dancing mote deserved to be mentioned after that of an immense mountain.

I am, with Christian respects to our kind, loving friends at Wem, your poor Madeley friend,

J. F.

LXXXIX.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, *July 30, 1766.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—So you are likely to be at rest first! Well, the Lord’s will be done! I should be glad to have you stay to help us to the kingdom of God; but if God wants to take you there, and house you before a storm, I shall only cry, “One of the chariots of Israel, and the horsemen thereof!” and try to make the best of my way after you.

A calm receiving of the gospel tidings, upon a conviction of your lost estate, with suitable tempers, is a sign that you are in a safe state ; but I want you altogether in a comfortable one. Your business, I apprehend, is not to turn the dunghill of nature, but to suck the gospel milk. Dwell much, if not altogether, upon "free justification, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." View the sufficiency, fulness, suitableness, freeness of his atonement and righteousness ; and hide yourself without delay under both. Look at death only as a door to let you out of manifold infirmities and pains, into the arms of Jesus, your heavenly Bridegroom. Stir up faith, hope, and love ; that is trimming your lamp. Since last Monday, I find the burden of your soul upon mine in a very particular manner ; and I hope that I shall not cease to pray for you, that you may go not only calmly, but joyfully, the way of all flesh. I have got some praying souls to share with me in this profitable work ; and I hope you will meet our spirits at the throne of grace, as we do yours.

Let me have the comfort of thinking that you are with your Physician, Husband, and All, who will order all things for the best. Pray hard, believe harder, and love hardest. Let the cry of your soul be, "None but Jesus living ; none but Jesus dying." Let Christ be your life ; and then death, whether it come sooner or later, will be your gain.

Mr. Glazebrook waits for these lines, and I conclude by again entreating you to believe. "Only believe," said Jesus to the ruler ; and faith will work by love, and love by a desire to depart and to be with Christ. God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, bless, uphold, and comfort you !

Farewell, and forget not to pray for

Your helpless friend,

J. F.

XC.—TO MISS —.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—The providence of our good God brought me safe here last Thursday, loaded with a sense of your excessive kindness, and my excessive unworthiness of it. Your Araunah-like spirit shames and distresses me: I am not quite satisfied about your evasions with respect to the bill; and though I grant it more blessed to give than to receive, I think you should not be so selfish as to engross all that blessedness to yourself. Nevertheless, I drop my upbraidings, not to lose that time in them which I should save to thank you, and to praise Jesus. I thank you, then, for all your favours; but, above all, for your secret prayers for a poor unworthy, unprofitable wretch, who deserves neither the name of a minister nor of a Christian. If you are so kind as to continue them, (which I earnestly beg you will,) I beseech you pray that I may have power to tarry at the footstool of divine mercy for a day of pentecost, till I am endued with power from on high for the work of the ministry and the blessings of Christianity.

I know not whether I am wrong in this respect, but I expect a power from on high to make me what I am not—an instrument to show forth the praises of the Redeemer, and to do some good to the souls of my fellow-creatures. Until this power comes, it appears to me that I spend my paltry strength in vain, and that I might as well sit still. But I know I must keep rowing, though the wind be contrary, till Jesus comes walking upon the waters, though it were in the last watch of the night.

You see, that while you praise on the top of the mountain, I hang my untuned harp on the mournful willow at the bottom. But Jesus was in Gethsemane, as well as on Tabor; and while he blesses you, he sympathizes with me. But this is speaking too much about self: good and bad

self must be equally denied ; and He that is the fulness of Him who fills all in all, must fill my thoughts, my desires, my letters, and my all. Come then, Lord, come and drop into our souls, as the dew into Gideon's fleece ; drop thy blessing on these lines ! and may thy blessed name, Jesus, "Emmanuel, God with us," be as ointment and rich perfumes poured upon my dear sister's soul ! Spread thy wings of love over her ; reward her a hundredfold in temporal and spiritual blessings, for the temporal and spiritual mercies she hath bestowed upon me as thy servant ! and vouchsafe to make and keep me such !

I want you to write to me what you think of the life of faith, and whether you breathe it without interruption ; whether you never leave that rich palace, Christ, to return to that dungeon, self ; what your feelings are when faith is at its lowest ebb, and when it acts most powerfully. I should be glad also if you would answer these questions : What views have you of another world ? What sense have you of the nearness of Christ ? What degree of fellowship with the souls nearest your heart ? What particular intimations of the will of God in intricate affairs and material steps ? And whether you can reconcile the life of faith with one wrong temper in the heart ?

If you are so good as to answer these questions at large, you will oblige me more than if you were to send me two hundred waistcoats and as many pairs of stockings. Jesus is life, love, power, truth, and righteousness. Jesus is ours ; yea, he is over all, through all, and in us all. May we so fathom this mystery, and so evidence the reality of it, that many may see, and fear, and turn to the Lord ! My kind love and thanks wait upon your sisters, &c. Farewell in Jesus. Pray for your obliged, unworthy servant,

J. F.

XCI.—TO MISS HATTON.

MADELEY, *Sept.* —, 1766.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—God wonderfully supports your tottering clay, that he may fill up what is lacking in your faith. Concur with the merciful design; arise in spirit, shake off the dust of earthly thoughts, put on your glorious apparel,—put on, every moment, the Lord Jesus Christ. Dare to believe; on Christ lay hold; wrestle with Christ in mighty, or even in feeble prayer. He breaks not the bruised reed; let the reed be grafted, by simple faith, in the true vine, in the tree of life, and it will bring forth glorious fruit; not only resignation, but power to welcome the king disarmed of his terrors, and turned into a messenger of joy, and a guide, under Christ, to heavenly happiness. Let not one feeble breath pass without carrying an act of desire, or of faith, toward Christ. Bestir yourself to lay hold on God; and when you find an absolute want of power, be you the more careful to lie at the feet of Him who hath all power given him in earth and heaven for you. Farewell, my dear friend; that is, be found in Christ; for there only can we fare well, whether we live or die.

J. F.

XCII.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, *Jan.* 9, 1767.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—The alteration for the worse I discovered in your health, the last time I had the pleasure of seeing you, makes me sit down to take a survey with you of our approaching dissolution. The dream of life will soon be over; the morning of eternity will soon succeed. Away then with all the shadows of time. Away from them to the eternal Substance; to Jesus, the first and the last, by whom, and for whom, all things consist.

We stand on the shore of a boundless ocean : death, like a lion, comes to break our bones : let us quietly strip ourselves of our mortal robes, that he may do with us as the Lord shall permit. In the mean while, let us step into the ark : Christ is the ark. My dear friend, believe in Jesus : believe that your sins, red as crimson, are made white as snow, by the superior tincture of his blood. Believe yourself into Christ. By simple faith, believe that he is your everlasting head : nor can you believe a lie ; for God hath given that Saviour to the worst of sinners, to be received by a lively faith ; and hath declared, that it shall be done unto us according to our faith. If you simply take Jesus to be your head by the mystery of faith, you will be united to the resurrection and the life. The bitterness of death is past, my dear friend. Only look to Jesus : he died for you,—died in your place, died under the frowns of heaven, that we might die under its smiles. The head was struck off that the members might be spared. Stand, then, in him ; be found in him ; plead that he hath wrought a sinless righteousness for you, and hath more than sufficiently atoned for you by his cruel sufferings and ignominious death. Regard neither unbelief nor doubt ; fear neither sin nor hell ; choose neither life nor death : all these are swallowed up in the immensity of Christ, and triumphed over in his cross.

Believe that he hath made an end of sin ; that you are comely in him ; that you are pardoned, accepted, and beloved of God, in the one Mediator, Jesus Christ. Reason not with the law ; but only with Him who says, “ Come, and let us reason together : though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow.” Fight the good fight of faith. Hold fast your confidence in the atoning, sanctifying blood of the Lamb of God : through his blood the accuser of the brethren is cast out. Confer no more with flesh and blood. Hunger and thirst after righteousness ;

eat the flesh, and drink the blood of the Redeemer; and live in Christ, that you may die in him. Up, and be doing the work of God. Believe in Him whom he hath sent: kiss the Son, lest he be angry; grasp him, as one who hath fallen into deep waters grasps the branch that hangs over him.

O slumber no more! Go, meet the bridegroom. Behold, he cometh! Trim your lamp; hold up the vessel of your heart to the streaming wounds of Jesus, and it shall be filled with the oil of peace and gladness. Quit yourself like a soldier of Jesus. Look back to the world, the things and friends about you, no more. I entreat you, as a companion in tribulation, I charge you, as a minister, go, at every breath you draw, according to the grace and power given you, to the physician, who gives nobody over; that says, "Him that cometh unto me, I will in no wise cast out;" and, "He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live."

Ere long there will be time no more. O my friend, stir up yourself to lay hold on him by faith and prayer; and let not those few sands that remain in your glass flow without the blood of Jesus. They are too precious to be offered up to slothful flesh, which is going to turn out its immortal inhabitant. Gladly resign your dust to the dust whence it was taken, and your spirit to him who gave and redeemed it. Look to him, in spite of flesh and blood, of Satan and unbelief; and joyfully sing the believer's song: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ!" Let your surviving friends rejoice over you as one "faithful unto death," as one triumphing in death itself.

I am just informed of Dear Miss Fragena's death. She caught a fever in visiting the poor sick of that distemper, and lived a week to stand and rejoice in dying pains. As

she lived she died, a burning and a shining light. Ere long you will meet her in Abraham's bosom, whence she beckons you to follow her as she followed Christ. Be of good cheer, be not afraid; the same God who helped her will carry you through. Your business is to commend yourself to him; his to keep safe that which you commit to him unto that day. To his faithfulness and love I commend you; and am, my dear friend, Yours in him,

J. F.

XCIIL.—TO MRS. HATTON.

MADELEY, *Jan. 30, 1767.*

DEAR MADAM,—I heard last night the news of Miss Hatton's death. As the stroke had long threatened you, and as she had, through mercy, long ago resigned herself to it, I hope it hath not found you without the shield of resignation, patience, and confidence in God. A sparrow, you know, falls not to the ground without his permission; much less can a member of his Son fall into the grave without his direction. Surely his wisdom is infallible: he hath chosen the better part both for you and your daughter; he hath chosen to take her out of her misery, to translate her to the place where the weary are at rest; and to give you, by removing her, an opportunity of caring for your soul as you cared for her body.

Now what have you to do, madam, but to put your hand upon your mouth, and say, "It is the Lord; he gave, and he hath taken away; blessed be his holy name!" If you sorrow, let it be in hope of meeting her soon, all glorious within and without, whom you lately saw such a spectacle of mortality. David observed, (in the lesson for this morning,) that the love of Jonathan had been better to him than the love of women. O dwell much upon the consideration of the love of Jesus, and you will find that it far surpasses that of the most dutiful children: and comfort yourself by

the believing thought that Jesus lives, lives for you, and that your daughter lives in him; where you will soon have the joy to meet her as an incarnate angel.

I am, with prayers for you and Miss Fanny, to whom I wish much consolation in her elder, never-dying Brother, dear madam, your unworthy, obliged servant in Christ,

J. F.

XCIV.—TO JAMES IRELAND, ESQ.

MADELEY, *Feb.*, 1767.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—The Lord will spare your daughter as long as she can get good, and do you and others good by the sight of her sufferings: when that cup is drunk up, she will be willing to go, and you to let her go. Remember she is the Lord's much more than yours; and that what we call "dying," is only breaking the shell of a troublesome body, that Christ may fully come at the kernel of the soul, which he has bought.

Poor Miss Hatton died last Sunday fortnight, full of serenity, faith, and love. The four last hours of her life were better than all her sickness. When the pangs of death were upon her, the comforts of the Almighty bore her triumphantly through, and some of her last words were, "Grieve not at my happiness:—this world is no more to me than a bit of burnt paper. Grace! grace! A sinner saved! I wish I could tell you half of what I feel and see. I am going to keep an everlasting Sabbath. O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? Thanks be to God, who giveth me the victory through my Lord Jesus Christ!" It is very remarkable that she had hardly any joy in her illness: but God made her ample amends in her extremity. He kept the strongest cordial for the time of need: he does all things well. Blessed, forever blessed, be his holy name!

Worcestershire also lately lost a wise virgin of a truth,

dear Miss Fragena, Mr. Biddulph's sister. The morning before she expired, she said, "I have had a stronger conflict last night than I ever had in all my life; it was sharp and terrible; but Jesus hath overcome, and he will also overcome for you and me: be of good courage; believe, hope, love, and obey."

I wish you had often such meetings as that you mention: every one should have as many thrusts at that crooked serpent, that holy devil, bigotry, as he can. If I can leave my parish, I believe it will be to accompany Lady Huntingdon to the Goshen of our land, Yorkshire, to learn the love of Christ at the feet of my brethren and fathers there. I am obliged to you for the present you mention. I have taken again to the drink of my country,—water, which agrees well with me, and I shall not want it for myself: if it is not sent, diminish or stop it, according to this notice. Farewell, in the Lord Jesus.

J. F.

XCV.—TO MISS BRAIN.

MADELEY, *Feb.*, 1767.

I HOPE my friend Mr. Ireland will not grudge me the room I take in this letter, to thank you for your last. It is travelling about, seeking its fortune, as well as the first: who knows but before it comes home, it will, like a baited hook, bring a fish along with it? I hope you go on and prosper, and do valiantly. I am glad to see the Lord leads you in the exalted way of exulting faith, triumphant hope, and rapturous love. Mount higher and higher: there is no fear of your losing yourself, except it be in the boundless tracks of divine mercy, and on the eternal hills of redeeming love; and to be lost there is to be happily found. I rejoice that you do not lose sight of the depth of human misery and depravity,—out of Jesus. With this ballast, the strongest blasts of spiritual rapture will never overset you. I also

thank God, that your faith works by love, and that you love not in pen and word only, but in deed and in truth: see that you abound herein more and more. As I trust you love to do well to your neighbours' bodies, see that you use well that of a neighbour of mine, whose name is Brain, and put her in remembrance to pray for

Her affectionate brother and unworthy servant,

J. F.

XCVI.—TO JAMES IRELAND, ESQ.

MADELEY, *March 30, 1767.*

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—Yesterday I received your kind letter, and your kind present about a month ago: it came safe, and is a large stock for the poor and me. The Lord return it you in living water: may it flow like a never-failing stream through your soul, and those of all who are near and dear to you; that is, not only those who belong to your own household, but also to the household of faith. What a pleasure to love all; and to be a well-wisher to all! I am glad you keep up your catholic meeting: a dozen of your way of thinking and acting would break the legs of that thief, bigotry, who reviles the crucified members of the crucified Jesus. God, who vouchsafed to meet even Balaam, when he went to curse Israel, will not fail to bless you, when you go to bless the scattered Israel of our Christ.

To return to your present: I return you my sincere thanks for it, as well as for all your former favours, and for your kind offers of new ones. I have one to ask now, which is, that you would stay your hand, and allow me to consume and wear out the old presents, without overcharging me with new ones. I do not say, stay your heart: no, let the oil of prayer flow from the cruise of your soul for me and mine, till our poor vessels are filled with the oil of humble love.

What you say about Miss Ireland's filling, puts me in mind of that worse disease of my heart, the dropsy of self. God gives me good physic and good food; but instead of digesting both properly, self retains what it should not. I fill, instead of remaining empty for fresh food; I lose my appetite, I swell, and am good for nothing but another operation. May the Lord so tap us that all our swelling may go down, and return no more! The good Samaritan, who is also a good physician, wants to tap you spiritually by the bodily tapping of your daughter. To be cut in the fruit of our body is, sometimes, more painful than to be cut in our own body: may both she and you reap the fruit of the successful operation whenever it takes place! I am, with cordial affection, my dear sir,

Your very much obliged, though very unworthy servant,
J. F.

XC VII.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, April 27, 1767.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—I have just received your letter, upon my arrival from Wales, with dear Lady Huntingdon, who is, of a truth, a tried stone, built upon the Corner-stone; and such as you have seen her, such, I am persuaded, you will find her to the last,—a soul devoted to Jesus, living by faith, going to Christ himself by the Scriptures, instead of resting in the letter of the gospel promises, as too many professors do.

I thank you for your care to procure not only a supply for my church, but such an agreeable, acceptable, and profitable one as Mr. Brown: I know none that should be more welcome than he. Tell him, with a thousand thanks for his condescension, that I deliver my charge over to him fully, and give him a *carte blanche*, to do or not to do, as the Lord will direct him. I have settled it that I should endeavour to overtake my lady at

Kippax, in Yorkshire, against the Sunday after Whitsuntide.

I have just time to tell you, with regard to the Bristol journey, that I must come first from the north, before I dream of going to the south. God help us to steer incessantly to the grand point of our salvation, Jesus the crucified. To him I recommend myself and you, and my noble guests. Love him, praise him, serve him, who hath loved you, bought you, and died for you. I remain, &c.

J. F.

XCVIII.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, *July 30, 1768.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Uncertain as I am whether your daughter is yet alive, or whether the Lord hath called her from this vale of darkness and tears, I know not what to say to you on the subject; but this, that our heavenly Father appoints all things for the best. If her days of suffering are prolonged, it is to honour her with a conformity to the crucified Jesus; if they are shortened, she will have drunk all her cup of affliction; and I flatter myself, that she has found at the bottom of it, not the bitterness and the gall of her sins, but the honey and wine of our divine Saviour's righteousness, and the consolations of his Spirit.

I had lately some views of death, and it appeared to me in the most brilliant colours. What is it to die, but to open our eyes after the disagreeable dream of this life, after the black sleep in which we are buried on this earth? It is to break the prison of corruptible flesh and blood, into which sin hath cast us; to draw aside the curtain, to cast off the material veil, which prevents us from seeing the supreme beauty and goodness face to face. It is to quit our polluted and tattered raiment, to be invested with robes of honour and glory; and to behold the Sun of righteousness in his

brightness, without an interposing cloud. O my dear friend, how lovely is death when we look at it in Jesus Christ! To die is one of the greatest privileges of the Christian.

If Miss Ireland be still living, tell her a thousand times that Jesus is the resurrection and the life; that he hath vanquished and disarmed death; that he hath brought life and immortality to light; and that all things are ours, whether life or death, eternity or time. These are those great truths upon which she ought to risk, or rather, to repose, her soul with full assurance. Everything is shadow and a lie, in comparison of the reality of the gospel. If your daughter be dead, believe in Jesus, and you shall find her again in him; who fills all in all, who encircles the material and spiritual world in his arms, in the immense bosom of his divinity.

I have not time to write to Mrs. Ireland; but I entreat her to keep her promise, and to inform me what victories she has gained over the world, the flesh, and sin. Surely when a daughter is dead or dying, it is high time for a father and a mother to die to all things below, and aspire in good earnest to that eternal life which God has given us in Jesus Christ. Adieu, my dear friend.

Yours,

J. F.

XCIX.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, *Oct. 14, 1768.*

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—I think I told you at Trevecka, that we had no farmers at Madeley, who feared God and loved Jesus. This generation among us are buried in the furrows of their ploughs, or under the heaps of corn which fill their granaries. Now that I am on the spot, I do not see one who makes it necessary for me to change my opinion.* Your bailiff cannot come from this Nazareth.

* Thank God, this is not now the character of all the farmers of Madeley!—EDITOR.

If the last efforts of the physicians fail with respect to Miss Ireland, it will at least be a consolation to you to know that they have been tried. When the last reed shall break under her hand, that will be the great signal to her to embrace the cross and the Crucified, the tree of life, and the fruits it bears, which give everlasting health and vigour. When we consider this with an evangelical eye, we discover that everything dies. Things visible are all transitory ; but invisible ones abide forever. If Christ be our life and our resurrection, it is of little importance whether we die now, or thirty years hence : and if we die without embracing him, by dying now, we shall have abused his mercies thirty years less than if we had lived so many years longer. Everything turns out well, both life and death, our own and that of those who are near to us.

Present my respects to your son, and tell him, that last week I buried three young persons of a malignant fever, who, on the second day of their illness, were deprived of their speech and senses, and on the fifth, of their lives. Of what avail are youth and vigour when the Lord lifts his finger ? And shall we sin against the eternal power, the infinite love, the inexorable justice, and the immense goodness of this God ; who gives us, from moment to moment, the breath which is in our nostrils ? No ; we will employ the precious gift in praising and blessing this good God, who is our Father in Jesus Christ.

I hope that you learn, as well as I, and better than I, to know Jesus in the Spirit. I have known him after the flesh, and after the letter ; I strive to know him in the power of his Spirit. Under the divine character of a quickening Spirit, he is everywhere. All that live, live in him ; and they who are spiritually alive, have a double life. The Lord give us this second life more abundantly !

Yours,

J. F.

C.—TO MISS IRELAND.

MADELEY, *Dec. 5, 1768.*

MY DEAR AFFLICTED FRIEND,—I hear you are returned from the last journey you took in search of bodily health. Your heavenly Father sees fit to deny it you, not because he hateth you, (“for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth,”) but because health and life might be fatal snares to your soul, out of which you could not escape but by tedious illness, and an early death. Who knows, also, whether, by all you have suffered and still suffer, our gracious Lord does not intend to kill you to the flesh and to the world, and both to you? Besides, our hearts are so stupid, and our insensibility so great, that the Father of our spirits sees it necessary to put some of his sharpest and longest thorns into our flesh, to make us go to our Jesus for the balmy graces of his Spirit.

I believe some are driven out of all the refuges of crafty and indolent nature, only by the nearest and last approaches of that faithful minister and servant of Christ, death. Of this I had a remarkable instance no later than last Monday, when God took to himself one of my poor afflicted parishioners, a boy of fifteen years of age, who was turned out of the infirmary two years ago as incurable. From that time he grew weaker every day by the running of a wound; but his poor soul did not gather strength. In many respects one would have thought his afflictions were lost upon him. He seemed to rest more in his sufferings, and in his patience under them, than in the Saviour’s blood and righteousness. Being worn to a skeleton, he took to his death-bed; where I found him the week before last, with his candle burning in the socket, and no oil seemingly in the vessel. I spent an hour in setting before him the greatness of his guilt in this respect, that he had been so long under the rod of

God, and had not been whipped out of his careless unbelief to the bosom of Jesus Christ. He fell under the conviction, confessed that particular guilt, and began to call on the Lord with all the earnestness his dying frame would allow. This was on the Wednesday; and on the Wednesday following, the God who delivers those that are appointed to die, set one of his feet upon the rock, and the next Sunday the other. He had chiefly used that short petition of the Lord's prayer, "Thy kingdom come:" and spent his last hours in testifying, as his strength would allow, that the kingdom was come, and he was going to the King; to whom he invited his joyful, mournful mother to make the best of her way after him. Five or six days before his death, my wicked, unbelieving heart might have said, "To what purpose hath God afflicted so long and so heavily this poor worm?" But the Lord showed that he had been all that while driving the spear of consideration and conviction, till at last it touched him in a sensible part, and made him cry to the Saviour in earnest. And who ever called upon him in vain? No one! Not even that poor indolent collier-boy, who for two years would not so much as cross the way to hear me preach. Yet how good was the Lord! Because his body was too weak to bear any terrors in his mind, he showed him mercy without. The moment I heard him pray, and saw him feel after a Saviour, my fears on his account vanished; and though he had not been suffered to testify so clearly of God's kingdom, yet I should have had a joyful hope that God had taken him home.

Like the poor youth and myself, you have but one enemy, my dear friend,—an indolent, unbelieving heart; but the Lord hath driven it to a corner, to make you cry to Him who hath been waiting at the door all these years of trouble, to bring you pardon, peace, and eternal life, in the midst of the pangs of bodily death. Jesus is his name. Salvation and love are his nature. He is the Father of eternity,—

your Father, of course. All the love that is in Mr. Ireland's breast, is nothing to the abyss of love that is in your Creator's heart. "A mother may forget her sucking child; but I will not forget thee," says he to every poor, distressed soul that claims his help.

O fear not, my friend, to say, "I will arise, and go to this Father, though I have sinned greatly against heaven, and in his sight." Lo, he rises; and runs to meet and embrace you. He hath already met you in the virgin's womb; there he did so cleave to your flesh and spirit, that he assumed both, and wears them as a pledge of love to you. Claim in return—claim, as you can—his blood and Spirit. Both are now the property of every dying sinner that is not above receiving by faith the unspeakable gift.

Your father has crossed the sea for you: Jesus has done more; he hath crossed the abyss that lies between heaven and earth, between the Creator and the creature. He has waded through the sea of his tears, blood, and agonies, not to take you to the physician at Montpellier, but to become your Physician and Saviour himself; to support you under all your bodily tortures, to sanctify all your extremities, and to heal your soul by his multiplied stripes. Your father has spared no expense to restore you to health; but Jesus, who wants you in your prime, hath spared no blood in his veins to wash you from your sins, write your pardon, and seal your title to glory.

O my friend, delay not cheerfully to surrender yourself to this good Shepherd. He will gladly lay you on the arm of his power, torn as you are with the bruises of sin and disease, and will carry you triumphantly to his heavenly sheepfold. Look not at your sins, without beholding his blood and righteousness. Eye not death, but to behold through that black door your gracious Saviour, saying, "Fear not, O thou of little faith; wherefore dost thou

doubt?" Consider not eternity but as the palace where you are going to enter with the Bridegroom of souls, and rest from all your sins and miseries. View not the condemning law of God, but as made honourable by Him who was a curse for you, and bore the malediction of the law, by hanging, bleeding, and dying, on the cursed tree in your place. If you think of hell, let it be to put you in mind to believe that the blood of God incarnate hath quenched its devouring flames. If you have no comfort, mistrust not Jesus on that account; on the contrary, take advantage from it to give greater glory to God, by believing, as Abraham did, "in hope against hope." And let this be your greatest comfort, that Jesus, who had all faith and patience, cried out for you in his dying moments, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me!" As your strength will bear exertion, and his grace apprehended will allow, surrender yourself constantly to him as the purchase of his blood, and invite him earnestly to you, as a poor worm perishing without him. In this simple, gospel way, wait the Lord's leisure, and he will comfort your heart. He will make all his goodness to pass before you here, or take you hence to show you, what you could not bear in flesh and blood, the direct beams of the uncreated beauty of your heavenly Spouse.

I hope you take care to have little or nothing else mentioned to and about you, but his praises and promises. Your tongue and ears are going to be silent in the grave: now or never, use them to hear and speak good of his name. Comfort your weeping friends: reprove the backsliders: encourage seekers. Water, and you shall be watered. Death upon you makes you, through Christ, a mother in Israel. Arise, as Deborah. Remember the praying, believing, preaching, though dying, thief; and be not afraid to drop a word for him who openeth a fountain of blood for you in his dying, tortured body. Suffer, live, die, at his feet;

and you will soon revive, sing, and reign in his bosom forevermore. Farewell in the Conqueror of death and Prince of life.

J. F.

CL.—TO JAMES IRELAND, ESQ.

MADELEY, *March 26, 1769.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—The Lord is desirous of making you a true disciple of his dear Son, the Man of sorrows, by sending you affliction upon affliction. A sister and a wife who appear to hasten to the grave, in which you have lately laid your only daughter, places you in circumstances of uncommon affliction. But in this see the finger of Him who works all in all, and who commands us to forsake all to follow him. Believe in him; believe that he does all for the best, and that all shall work for good to those who love him; and you shall see the salvation of God, and, with your temptations and trials, he shall open a door of deliverance for you and yours. His goodness to your daughter, ought to encourage your faith and confidence for Mrs. Ireland. Offer her upon the altar; and you shall see that, if it be best for her and you, his grace will suspend the blow which threatens you.

Your rich present of meal came last week, and shall be distributed to the pious poor, agreeably to your orders, as a proof that Jesus, the liberal Jesus, the bread of life, is indeed risen and lives in his members, who mutually aid and comfort each other. We are happy to receive your bounty; but you are more happy in bestowing it upon us: witness the words of Jesus,—“it is more blessed to give than to receive.” Nevertheless, receive by faith the presents of the Lord, the gifts of his Spirit, and reject not the bread which cometh down from heaven, because the Lord gives you it with so much love. Adieu. The God of peace be with you, and prepare you for whatever it shall please him to appoint.

I shall be obliged to go to Switzerland this year or the next, if I live, and the Lord permit. I have there a brother, a worthy man, who threatens to leave his wife and children to come and pay me a visit, if I do not go and see him myself. It is some time since our gracious God has convinced him of sin, and I have by me some of his letters which give me great pleasure. This circumstance has more weight with me than the settlement of my affairs.

Yours,

J. F.

CII.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, *May 27, 1769.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I sympathize with you with all my heart, and I pray that you may have patience and wisdom proportioned to your difficulties. You must take up your cross, and pray in secret, like a man whose earthly cisterns are broken on every side, and who hath need of consolation from feeling the fountain of living waters springing up in his soul unto eternal life. I have every moment need to follow the advice I give to you; but my carnal mind makes strong resistance. I must enter into life by death; I must be crucified on the cross of Christ, before I can live by the power of his resurrection. The Lord give us grace to die to ourselves; for it is not enough to die to our relatives. Blessed, indeed, is that union with Jesus Christ by which a believer can cast upon that Rock of ages, not only his burdens, but himself,—the heaviest burden of all. O Lord, give us power to believe with that faith which works by the prayer of confidence and love!

I am, &c.,

J. F.

CIII.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, *Dec. 30, 1769.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Last night I received your obliging letter, and am ready to accompany you to Montpellier, provided you will go with me to Nyon. I shall raise about twenty guineas; and with that sum, a gracious Providence, and your purse, I hope we shall want for nothing. If the Lord send me, I shall want nothing, though I had nothing, and though my fellow-traveller was no richer than myself.

I hope to be at Bristol soon, to offer you my services to pack up. You desired to have a Swiss servant, and I offer myself to you in that capacity; for I shall be no more ashamed of serving you, as far as I am capable of doing it, than I am of wearing your livery.

Two reasons (to say nothing of the pleasure of your company) engage me to go with you to Montpellier,—a desire to visit some poor Huguenots in the south of France; and the need I have to recover a little French, before I go to converse with my compatriots.

The priest at Madeley is going to open his mass-house, and I have declared war on that account last Sunday, and propose to strip the whore of Babylon, and expose her nakedness to-morrow. All the Papists are in a great ferment, and they have held meetings to consult on the occasion. One of their bloody bullies came to “pick up,” as he said, a quarrel with me; and what would have been the consequence, had not I providentially had company with me, I know not. How far more their rage may be kindled to-morrow, I do not know; but I question whether it will be right for me to leave the field in these circumstances. I forgot to mention, that two of our poor ignorant churchmen are going to join the mass-house, which is the cause of my having taken up arms also. Farewell.

CIV.—TO THE SAME.

TREVECKA, *January 13, 1770.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I know not what to think of our journey. My heart frequently recoils; I have lost all hopes of being able to preach in French, and I think if I could they would not permit me. I become more stupid every day; my memory fails me in a surprising manner. I am good for nothing but to go and bury myself in my parish. I have those touches of misanthropy which make solitude my element: judge, then, whether I am fit to go into the world. On the other hand, I fear that your journey is undertaken partly from complaisance to me, and in consequence of the engagement we made to go together. I acquit you of your promise; and if your business does not really demand your presence in France, I beg you will not think of going there on my account. The bare idea of giving you trouble would make the journey ten times more disagreeable to me than the season of the year.

The day after I wrote to you, I preached the sermons against Popery, which I had promised to my people; and Mr. S—t—r called out several times in the church-yard, as the people went out of church, that there was not one word of truth in the whole of my discourse, and that he would prove it; and told me that he would “produce a gentleman who should answer my sermon, and the pamphlet I had distributed.” I was therefore obliged to declare in the church, that I should not quit England, and was only going into Wales, from whence I would return soon, to reply to the answer of Mr. S—t—r and the priest, if they should offer any. I am thus obliged to return to Madeley, by my word so publicly pledged, as well as to raise a little money for my journey. Were it not for these circumstances, I believe I should pay you a visit at Bristol, notwithstanding my misanthropy.

The hamper which you mention, and for which I thank you, provided it be the last, arrived three days before my departure; but not knowing what it was, nor for whom it was intended, I put it in my cellar without opening it. I want the living water rather than cider, and righteousness more than clothes. I fear, however, lest my unbelief should make me set aside the fountain whence it flows, as I did your hamper. Be that as it may, it is high time to open the treasures of divine mercy, and to seek in the heart of Jesus for the springs of love, righteousness, and life. The Lord give us grace so to seek that we may find, and be enabled to say, with the woman in the gospel, "I have found the piece of silver which I had lost!"

If your affairs do not really call you to France, I will wait until Providence and grace shall open a way for me to the mountains of Switzerland, if I am ever to see them again. Adieu. Give yourself wholly to God. A divided heart, like a divided kingdom, falls naturally, by its own gravity, either into darkness or into sin. My heart's desire is, that the love of Jesus may fill your soul, and that of your unworthy and greatly obliged servant,

J. F.

CV.—TO MR. —.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—My delay has, I hope, driven you to the Lord, who is our Urim and Thummim, whose answers are infallibly true and just. Not so those of men; nevertheless, the Lord generally helps us by each other. May he therefore help you by these lines!

You got safe out of Egypt with gladness, and now you seem entangled in the wilderness; but it may be needful for the trial of your faith, patience, self-denial, &c., that you should be left for awhile to feel your own barrenness. Therefore, hold fast what you have, till the Lord comes with more; equally avoiding discouraging thoughts and slight

indifference. Retire more inwardly, and quietly listen to what the Lord will say concerning you; refusing creature comforts, and acting faith in God your Creator, Christ your Redeemer, and the Spirit your Comforter.

You have always a feeling which, properly attended to, would make you shout, "I am, I am out of hell!" I beg that this wonderful mercy may not appear cheap to you: if it does, you have got up, and must come down; for it is proper that the Lord should bring down your spirit, and keep you upon crumbs, till you have learned to be thankful for them.

At the first reading of your letter, these things struck me: 1. You are wanting in the venture of faith: you do not give enough to that kind of implicit confidence in Christ which says, "I will trust in thee, though thou slay me." Now this is a lesson which you must learn. Sink or swim, a believer must learn to cast himself headlong into the boundless sea of divine truth and love. 2. You have not learned to hold fast what you have, and to be thankful for it till the Lord comes with more; till he baptizes you with the Holy Ghost and with fire. 3. You do not make a proper use of the joy of hope, which, nevertheless, is to be your strength till the Lord comes to his temple to make his abode there. Adieu. J. F.

CVI.—TO THE REV. GEORGE WHITEFIELD, LONDON.

MADELEY, *May 28.*

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—I thank you, though late, for the kind leave you gave me of trying to pipe where you sound and trumpet forth the name of our dear Redeemer, in Bristol. I ask you, my hearers there, and, above all, our gracious Lord, pardon for the wretched manner in which I performed, or rather spoiled, the glorious work. "His blood be upon us," and sprinkle our holy, or rather unholy, things! If Mr. Winter is in London, I beg you would re-

peat my thanks to him for all his undeserved patience and kindness to me while at Bristol.

I thank you, sir, for your letter to the vice-chancellor, Mr. Talbot, who read it, with a proper emphasis, to the archbishop of Canterbury, and treated us with the reading of it at our meeting of the clergy at Birmingham; and I saw applause and satisfaction sitting upon every brow. God give his tenfold blessing to your labours from the pulpit and press! How good is the Lord to give us opportunities to serve him with our pen when our lungs are disabled! We need not be idle in so large a vineyard, so vast a field of action.

I had lately a few lines from Lady Huntingdon, who mentions that Providence raises a master for her school from Suffolk, who promises very well. She desires he may be secured, if approved of. You know him, perhaps, sir; and you are the best judge whether he is likely to answer. For my part, I am willing to put my smoking flax to the tapers of my brethren and fathers, when they endeavour to throw some light and order upon her ladyship's design; but I feel my place should be among the scholars, rather than among the directors.

Mr. Glascott acquitted himself as a faithful and able minister during his stay here. Thousands attended him in the next parish, where he nobly took the field. Nevertheless, I see a curse of barrenness upon this neighbourhood, which makes me groan for a day of pentecost: God hasten it in his time! You will please to remember, that you are a debtor to our barbarians, as well as to the Greeks of London. When you come, my pulpit will be honoured, greatly honoured, to hold you, if my church cannot hold your congregation. I am, reverend and dear sir, your unworthy servant,

J. FLETCHER.

Remember me in Christian love to Mrs. Whitefield, Mr. Kean, Mr. Hardy, Mr. Wright, and Joyce, &c.

CVII.—TO THE REV. DAVID SIMPSON, MACCLESFIELD.

MADELEY, *Aug. 4, 1770.*

REVEREND AND DEAR SIR,—I have sometimes preached in licensed places, but have never been censured for it. Perhaps it is because my superiors in the church think me not worth their notice, and despair of shackling me with their unevangelical regularity. If the bishop were to take me to task about this piece of irregularity, I would observe,—1. That the canons of men cannot overthrow the canons of God. “Preach the word. Be instant in season and out of season. The time cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship,” particularly and exclusively of all other places, neither on mount Gerizim, nor upon mount Zion; but they shall worship everywhere in spirit and in truth. The contrary canons are Jewish, and subversive of the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free; yea, contrary to the right of churchmen, which must, at least, include the privileges of dissenters. 2. Before the bishop shackled me with canons, he charged me to “look for Christ’s lost sheep that are dispersed abroad, and for his children who are in the midst of this wicked world;” and these sheep, &c., I will try to gather whenever I meet them. We have a general canon: “While we have time, let us do good to all men, and especially to them who are of the household of faith. Go into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature” willing to hear it. A justice of peace would once prosecute me upon the conventicle act; but when it came to the point, he durst not do it. Some of my parishioners went and complained to the bishop about my conventicles. I wrote to the registrar, that I hoped his lordship, who had given me the above-mentioned charge at my ordination, would not be against my following it; that I thought it hard the tipplers should have twenty or thirty

tippling-houses, the dissenters three or four, the papists one, meeting-house in my parish, undisturbed, and that I should be disturbed, because I would not have God's word confined to one house ;—and that, with respect to the canons, it would be absurd to put them in force against preaching clergymen, when they were set aside with respect to catechising, tippling, gaming, and carding clergymen ;—that I did not desire his lordship to patronize me, in a special manner, in the use of my Christian liberty ; but that I hoped he would connive at it. Whether they received my letter or not, I do not know ; but they never attempted to molest me. As I was speaking on the head of preaching in licensed places, or dissenting meeting-houses, with the late Mr. Whitefield, he told me, that when a minister of the Church of England did read the common-prayer, there was no law against him ; and that the church clergy do so very frequently in America.

The questions of your letter are most of them out of my sphere ; but they may be properly answered by a worthy servant of Christ, the Rev. John Ryland, minister of the new chapel at Birmingham, whose case is somewhat similar to yours. This chapel was built upon the estate of a serious lady, who got it consecrated, and presented him. I design to send him your letter, and desire him to give you and your worthy patron, (to whom I beg you would present my Christian respects,) all the intelligence he can. Only be modestly and steadily bold for God, and your enemies will be more afraid of you than you of them ; or, if God will honour you with the badge of persecution, he will comfort and bless you the more for it. May the God of all grace and power be with you more and more ! Ask it, dear sir, for

Your brother and servant in Christ,

J. FLETCHER.

CVIII.—TO MR. HENRY BROOKE.

MADELEY, *Sept. 6, 1772.*

DEAR SIR,—If to do were as present with me as to wish, you would have been half ruined in the postage of letters. I cannot tell you how often I have thought of thanking you for your kind letter. My controversy made me put it off some time, and when I was going one day to answer you, a clergyman called upon me, read your letter, said you were a sensible author, and if I would let him have it, he would let me have your “Fool of Quality,” of which I had never heard. I forgot to take your direction, and my backwardness to writing had a very good excuse to indulge itself. However, it ceases now : after some months my friend has sent me back your unexpected but welcome favour ; I know in what street you live. A thousand thanks for it ; and a thousand more for the amiable character of your Harry, my kind, my new correspondent. May this sheet convey them warm from my heart to yours ; and thence may they return like a thousand drops into that immense ocean of goodness, truth, love, and delight, whence come all the streams which gladden the universe, and ravish the city of God.

I thankfully accept the pleasure, profit, and honour of your correspondence. But I must not deceive you. I have not yet learned the blessed precept of our Lord, in respect of writing and receiving letters. I still find it more blessed to receive than to give ; and until I have got out of that selfishness, never depend on a letter from me till you see it ; and be persuaded, nevertheless, that one from you will always be welcome.

I see by your works that you love truth, and that you will force your way through all the barriers of prejudice to embrace it in its meanest dress. That makes me love you.

I hope to improve by your example and your lessons. One thing I want truly to learn, that is, that creatures and visible things are but shadows, and that God is God, Jehovah, the true eternal substance. To live practically in this truth, is to live in the suburbs of heaven. Really to believe, that in God we live, move, and have our being, is to find and enjoy the root of our existence: it is to slide from self into our original principle, from the carnal into the spiritual, from the visible into the invisible, from time into eternity. Give me, at your leisure, some directions how to cease from busying myself about the husks of things, and how I shall break through the shell till I come to the kernel of resurrection, life, and power, that lies hid from the unbeliever's sight. You mention "a short sketch of your path already passed, and of your present feelings." I believe it will be profitable to me for instruction and reproof: therefore I shall gladly accept it.

Pray, my dear sir, about feelings:—Are you possessed of all the feelings of your Clinton, Clement, and Harry? Are they natural to you? I mean previous to what we generally call "conversion." I have often thought that some of the feelings you describe depend a good deal upon the fineness of the nerves and bodily organs; and, as I am rather of a stoic turn, I have sometimes comforted myself in thinking that my want of feeling might, in some degree, proceed from the dulness of Swiss nerves. If I am not mistaken, Providence directs me to you to have this important question solved. May not some persons have as much true faith, love, humanity, and pity, as others who are ten times more affected, at least for a season? And what directions would you give to a Christian stoic? if these two ideas are not absolutely incompatible. My stoicism helps me, I think, to weather out a storm of displeasure which my little pamphlets have raised against me. You see, I at once consult you as an old friend and spiritual casuist; nor

know I how to testify better to you how unreservedly I begin to be, my very dear friend, yours in the Lord,*

J. F.

CIX.—TO MR. VAUGHAN.

MADELEY, *Feb.* 11, 1773.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—Your kind letter I received in the beginning of the week, and your kind present at the end of it. For both I heartily thank you. Nevertheless, I could wish it were your last present; for I find it more blessed to give than to receive; and in point of the good things of this life, my body does not want much, and I can do with what is more common and cheap than the rarities you ply me with.

Your bounty upon bounty reminds me of the repeated mercies of our God. They follow one another as wave does wave at sea; and all to waft us to the pleasing shore of confidence and gratitude, where we can not only cast anchor near, but calmly stand on the Rock of ages, and defy the rage of tempests. But you complain you are not there: billows of temptation drive you from the haven, where you would be, and you cry out still, “O wretched man! who shall deliver me?”

Here I would ask, Are you willing, really willing, to be delivered? Is your sin, is the prevalence of temptation, a burden too heavy for you to bear? If it is, if your complaint is not a kind of religious compliment, be of good cheer, only believe. Look up; for your redemption draws near. He is near that delivers, that justifies, that sanctifies you. Cast your soul upon him: an act of faith will help you to a lift; but one act of faith will not do—faith must be our life, I mean in connexion with its grand object.

* Mr. Fletcher, when he wrote the above, mistook Mr. Henry Brooke, junior, for Mr. Henry Brooke, senior, the author of the *Fool of Quality*.

You cannot live by one breath ; you must breathe on, and draw the electric, vital fire into your lungs together with the air. So you must believe, and draw the divine power, and the fire of Jesus's love, together with the truth of the gospel, which is the blessed element in which believers live.

My kind Christian love to Mrs. Vaughan. Tell her I am filled with joy in thinking, that though we no more serve the same earthly master, yet we still serve the same heavenly one, who will ere long admit us to sit with Abraham himself, if we hold fast our confidence to the end.

Beware of the world. If you have losses, be not cast down, nor root in the earth with more might and main to repair them. If prosperity smile upon you, you are in double danger. Think, my friend, that earthly prosperity is like a coloured cloud, which passes away, and is soon lost in the shades of night and death. Beware of hurry. Martha, Martha, one thing is needful. Choose it, stand to your choice, and the good part shall not be taken from you by sickness or death. God bless you and yours with all that makes for his glory and your peace !

I am, my dear friend, yours, &c.,

J. F.

CX.—TO JAMES IRELAND, ESQ.

MADELEY, *Sept. 21, 1773.*

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—I do not hear from my brother : my views of a journey abroad continue the same. I have considered what you say about the translation of my Appeal : and I think I might from it take the hint, and do it some day ; nay, I tried to turn a paragraph or two the day after I received your letter, but found it would be a difficult if not an impossible work for me. I am sure I could not do it abroad. On a journey I am just like a cask of wine : I am good for nothing till I have some time to settle.

What you say about Mr. Wesley adds weight to your

kind arguments: but supposing he or the people did not alter his mind, this would not sufficiently turn the scale in point of conscience, though it is already turned in point of affection. My spiritual circumstances are what I must look at. I am brought to a point: like a woman with child, I must have a deliverance into the liberty of a higher dispensation, and I tremble lest outward things should hurt me. The multiplicity of objects, circumstances, and avocations, which attend travelling, is as little suited to my case, as to that of a woman with child. I think that, all things considered, I should sin against my conscience in going, unless I had a call from necessity, or from clearer providences. Should Mr. Wesley find a desire of accompanying you, I think you might set out with a single eye, according to your light and faith; and I trust the journey would be of service to both, and, in that case, my heart shall go along with you. If you go, pray find out, and converse with the Convulsionaries. My request is, that you may see your way plain, be fully persuaded in your own mind, and be led and covered by the cloud of divine protection.

I thank you for having dared to speak a word for me at Worcester; but the stream of prejudice ran too high for you to stop it: it was drowning yourself without saving your friend. It is good to know when to yield.

My last Check will be as much in behalf of free grace as of holiness. So I hope, upon that plan, all the candid and moderate will be able to shake hands. It will be of a reconciling nature; and I call it "An Equal Check to Pharisaism and Antinomianism."

I see life so short, and that time passes away with such rapidity, that I should be very glad to spend it in solemn prayer; but it is necessary that a man should have some exterior occupation. The chief thing is to employ ourselves profitably. My throat is not formed for the labours of preaching: when I have preached three or four times

together, it inflames and fills up ; and the efforts which I am then obliged to make in speaking heat my blood. Thus I am by nature, as well as by the circumstances I am in, obliged to employ my time in writing a little. O that I may be enabled to do it to the glory of God ! Let us love this good God, “ who hath so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that we might not perish, but have everlasting life.” How sweet is it, on our knees, to receive this Jesus, this heavenly gift, and to offer our praises and thanks to our heavenly Father ! The Lord teaches me four lessons : the first is, to be thankful that I am not in hell ; the second, to become nothing before him ; the third, to receive the gift of God,—the person of Jesus ; and the fourth is, to feel my want of the Spirit of Jesus, and to wait for it. These four lessons are very deep. O when shall I have learned them ! Let us go together to the school of Jesus, and learn to be meek and lowly in heart. Adieu.

J. F.

CXI.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, *Feb. 6, 1774.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—In the present circumstances, it was a great piece of condescension in dear Lady Huntingdon to be willing to see me privately ; but for her to permit me to wait upon her openly, denotes such generosity, such courage, and a mind so much superior to the narrowness that clogs the charity of most professors, that it would have amazed me, if everything that is noble and magnanimous were not to be expected from her ladyship. It is well for her that spirits are imprisoned in flesh and blood, or I might by this time (and it is but an hour since I received your letter) have troubled her ten times with my apparition, to wish her joy of being above the dangerous snare of professors,—the smiles and frowns of the religious world ; and

to thank her a thousand times for not being ashamed of her old servant, and for cordially forgiving him all that is past, upon the score of the Lord's love, and of my honest meaning.

But though my mind has travelled so fast to Bath on reading your letter, yet an embargo is laid upon my body: "I must not go yet." I am the more inclined to take the hint for two reasons. I will tell you all my heart about it. The more I see her ladyship's generosity, and admire the faithfulness of the friendship that she has for many years honoured me with, the more I ought to take care not to bring burdens upon her. It might lessen her influence with those she is connected with, and might grieve some of her friends, who possibly would look upon her condescension as an affront to them. This is the first reason. The second respects myself. I must follow my light. A necessity is laid upon me to clear my conscience with respect to the Antinomian world, and to point out the stumbling-block that keeps many serious people from embracing the real doctrines of free grace. I cannot do this without advancing some truths, which I know her ladyship receives as well as myself, but which, by my manner of unfolding them, will, at first sight, appear dreadful touches to the gospel of the day. I am just sending to the press, "A Scriptural Essay upon the Astonishing Rewardableness of the Works of Faith." Though it consists only of plain Scriptures, and plain arguments, without anything personal, I think it will raise more dust of prejudice against me than my preceding publications. With respect to myself, I do not mind it; but I am bound in love to mind it with respect to her ladyship. My respect to her ladyship, therefore, together with the preceding reason, determine me to defer paying my respects personally to her, till after the publication of my Essay and Scripture Scales; and if she does not then revoke the kind leave she gives me, I shall most gladly make the best of my way to

assure her in person, as I do now by this indirect means, that I am, and shall forever be, her dutiful servant, in what appears to me the plain gospel of our common Lord.

The smartness of the letter-writer in the Westminster Journal, and his bringing college charges against me, made me think he was probably the Author of *The Whip* for Pelagian Methodists. Well, after all, St. John's love will carry the day. If I have all faith, and have not that, I am nothing. But when you plead for love, you plead for the chief work I contend for: so you are almost as deep in the mud as I am in the mire. With love to yourself, and dutiful love to our noble friend,

I am, &c.,

J. F.

CXII.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, *March 27, 1774.*

MY DEAR SIR,—I think I wrote my last two days before I received your bounty—a large hogshead of rice and two cheeses. Accept the thanks of our poor and mine on the occasion. I distributed it on Shrove Tuesday; and preached to a numerous congregation on, “Seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you.” May you and I find the bread we scattered that day, though it should not be till after many days. We prayed for our benefactor, that God would give him a hundredfold in this life, and eternal life where life eternal will be no burden. I saw then what I have not often seen on such occasions, gladness without the appearance of envying or grudging.

How kind is my lady to offer to interpose, and to wipe off the aspersions of my London accusers! I had before sent my reply, which was only a plain narrative of two facts, upon which it appeared to me the capital charges were founded, together with some gentle expostulations, which, I hope, have had the desired effect. Give my duty

to the dear elect lady, and thank her a thousand times for this new addition to all her former favours, till I have an opportunity of doing it in person.

I get very slowly out of the mire of my controversy; and yet I hope to get over it, if God spares my life, in two or three pieces more. Since I wrote last, I have added to my Equal Check, a piece which I call "An Essay on Truth; or, a Rational Vindication of the Doctrine of Salvation by Faith," which I have taken the liberty to dedicate to Lady Huntingdon, to have an opportunity of clearing her ladyship from the charge of Antinomianism. I have taken this step in the simplicity of my heart; and as due from me, in my circumstances, to the character of her ladyship. Mr. H—t—n called some time after the letter was printed, and told me, "It will not be well taken." I hope better; but be it as it will, I shall have the satisfaction of having meant well.

I have just spirit enough to enjoy my solitude, and to bless God that I am out of the hurry of the world, even the spiritual world. I tarry gladly in my Jerusalem, till the kingdom of God comes with power; till then, it matters not where I am: only as my chief call is here, here I gladly stay, till God fits me for the pulpit or the grave. I still spend my mornings in scribbling. Though I grudge so much time in writing, yet a man must do something; and I may as well investigate truth as do anything else, except solemn prayer and visiting my flock. I shall be glad to have done with my present avocation, that I may give myself up more to those two things.

O how life goes! I walked, now I gallop into eternity. The bowl of life goes rapidly down the steep hill of time. Let us be wise: embrace we Jesus and the resurrection: let us trim our lamps, and give ourselves afresh to Him that bought us, till we can do it without reserve. Adieu.

J. F.

CXIII.—TO THE REV. CHARLES WESLEY.

MADELEY, *Jan.*, 1775.

MY VERY DEAR SIR,—I thank you for your letter, and your very friendly postscript to your brother's. I am glad you did not altogether disapprove my Essay upon Truth. The letter, I grant, profiteth but little, until the Spirit animates it. I had, some weeks ago, one of these touches, which realize, or, rather, spiritualize the letter; and it convinced me more than ever, that what I say in that tract of the Spirit, and of faith, is truth.

I am also persuaded, that the faith and spirit which belong to perfect Christianity are at a very low ebb, even among believers. When the Son of man cometh to set up his kingdom, shall he find Christian faith upon the earth? Yes; but, I fear, as little as he found of Jewish faith when he came in the flesh.

I believe you cannot rest either with the easy Antinomian, or the busy Pharisee. You and I have nothing to do but to die to all that is of sinful nature, and to pray for the power of an endless life. God make us faithful to our convictions, and keep us from the snares of outward things. You are in danger from music, children, poetry; and I from speculation, controversy, sloth, &c., &c. Let us watch against the deceitfulness of self and sin in all their appearances.

What power of the Spirit do you find among the believers in London? what openings of the kingdom? Is the well springing up in many hearts? Are many souls dissatisfied, and looking for the kingdom of God in power? Watchman, what of the night?—what of the day?—what of the dawn?

I feel the force of what you say in your last about the danger of so encouraging the inferior dispensation as to

make people rest short of the faith which belongs to perfect Christianity. I have tried to obviate it in some parts of the Equal Check, and hope to do it more effectually in my reply to Mr. Hill's Creed for Perfectionists. Probably, I shall get nothing by my polemic labours but loss of friends, and charges of "novel chimeras" on both sides. I expect a letter from you on the subject. Write with openness, and do not fear to discourage me by speaking your disapprobation of what you dislike. My aim is to be found at the feet of all, bearing and forbearing, until truth and love bring better days.

I am, reverend and dear sir, your most affectionate brother and son in the gospel.

J. F.

CXIV.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, *Dec. 4, 1775.*

MY VERY DEAR BROTHER,—I see the end of my controversial race; and I have such courage to run it out, that I think it my bounden duty to run and strike my blow, and fire my gun before the water of discouragement has quite wetted the gunpowder of my activity. This makes me seem to neglect my dearest correspondents.

Old age comes faster upon me than upon you. I am already so gray-headed, that I wrote to my brother to know if I am not fifty-six instead of forty-six. The wheel of time moves so rapidly that I seem to be in a new element; and yet, praised be God, my strength is preserved far better than I could expect. I came home last night at eleven o'clock tolerably well, after reading prayers and preaching twice, and giving the sacrament in my own church, and preaching again, and meeting a few people in society at the next market-town.

The Lord is wonderfully gracious to me; and, what is more to me than many favours, he helps me to see his

mercies in a clearer light. In years past, I did not dare to be thankful for mercies which now make me shout for joy. I had been taught to call them "common mercies;" and I made as little of them as apostates do of the blood of Christ when they call it "a common thing." But now the veil begins to rend, and I invite you, and all the world, to praise God for his patience, truth, and loving-kindness, which have followed me all my days, and prevented me, not only in the night-watches, but in the past ages of eternity. O how I hate the delusion which has robbed me of so many comforts! Farewell.

I am, &c.,

J. F.

CXV.—TO JAMES IRELAND, ESQ.

MADELEY, *Feb. 3, 1776.*

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—Upon the news of your illness by Mr. G——, I and many more helped to pray that you might be supported under your pressures, and that they might yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness. We shall now turn our prayers into praises for your happy recovery, and for the support the Lord has granted you under your trial. May it now appear that you imitate David, who said, "It was good for me that I was afflicted." Let people say what they will, there are lessons which we can never learn but under the cross: we must suffer with Christ, if we will be glorified with him. I hope you will take care that it may not be said of you, as it was of Hezekiah, "He rendered not unto the Lord according to the benefit of his recovery." Let us rather say, "What shall I render unto the Lord for all his benefits?" And may we see the propriety and profit of rendering him our bodies and our souls; the sacrifices of humble, praising, obedient love, and warm, active, cheerful thanksgiving.

A young clergyman offers to assist me: if he does, I may make an excursion somewhere this spring: where it

will be I do not know. It may be into eternity, for I dare not depend upon to-morrow; but should it be your way, I shall inform you of a variety of family trials, which the Lord has sent me,—all for good, to break my will in every possible respect.

My little political piece is published in London. You thank me for it beforehand: I believe it is the only thanks I shall have. It is well you sent them before you read the book; and yet, whatever contempt it brings upon me, I still think I have written the truth. If you did read my publications, I would beg you to cast a look upon that, and reprove what appears to you amiss; for if I have been wrong in writing, I hope I shall not be so excessively wrong as not to be thankful for any reproof candidly levelled at what I have written. I prepare myself to be like my Lord, in my little measure. I mean to be “despised and rejected of men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with griefs;” most reviled for what I mean best. The Lord strengthen you in body and soul to do and suffer his will. Adieu.

J. F.

CXVI.—TO MR. VAUGHAN.

MADELEY, *March 21, 1776.*

DEAR SIR,—Your barrel of cider came safe as to the outside, and, I hope, as to the inside too. How could you think to make me such a present? But I must rather thank you for your love and generosity, than scold you for your excessive profusion. You should have stayed at least till cider was ten shillings a hogshead; but in such a year as this—however, the Lord reward you, and return it to you in streams of living water, and plenty of the wine of his kingdom!

I thought I should soon have done with controversy; but now I give up the hope of having done with it before I die. There are three sorts of people I must continually

attack, or defend myself against—Gallios, Pharisees, and Antinomians. I hope I shall die in this harness, fighting against some of them. I do not, however, forget, that the Gallio, the Simon, and the Nicholas within are far more dangerous to me than those without. In my own heart, that immense field, I must first fight the Lord's battles and my own. Help me here; join me in this field. All Christians are here militia-men, if they are not professed soldiers. O, my friend, I need wisdom, meekness of wisdom: a heart full of it is better than all your cider-vault full of the most generous liquors; and it is in Christ for us. O go, and ask for you and me, and I shall ask for me and you. What a mercy is it that our Lord bears stock! May we not be ashamed or afraid to come, and beg every moment for wine and milk, grace and wisdom.

Beware, my friend, of the world: let not its cares nor the deceitfulness of its riches keep or draw you from Jesus. Before you handle the bird-lime, be sure to dip your heart and hand in the oil of grace. Time flies. Years of plenty and of scarcity, of peace and war, disappear before the eternity to which we are all hastening. May we see now the winged despatch of time as we shall see it in a dying hour; and by coming to, and abiding in Christ, our fortress and city of refuge, may we be enabled to bid defiance to our last enemy. Christ has fully overcome him; and by the victory of the Head, the living members cannot but be fully victorious.

Remember me kindly to Mrs. Vaughan. That the Lord would abundantly bless you, both in your souls, bodies, concerns, and children, is the sincere wish of, dear sir,

Your affectionate friend,

J. F.

CXVII.—TO THE REV. CHARLES WESLEY.

MADELEY, *May 11, 1776.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,—What are you doing in London? Are you ripening as fast for the grave as I am?—How should we lay out every moment for God! I have had for some days the symptoms of an inward consumptive decay, spitting blood, &c. Thank God, I look at our last enemy with great calmness. I hope, however, that the Lord will spare me to publish my end of the controversy, which is, “A Double Dissertation upon the Doctrines of Grace and Justice.” This piece will, I flatter myself, reconcile all the candid Calvinists and candid Arminians, and be a means of pointing out the way in which peace and harmony might be restored to the Church.

I still look for an outpouring of the Spirit, inwardly and outwardly. Should I die before that great day, I shall have the consolation to see it from afar, like Abraham and the Baptist, and to point it out to those who shall live when God does this.

Thank God, I enjoy uninterrupted peace in the midst of my trials, which are sometimes not a few. Joy also I possess; but I look for a joy of a superior nature. The Lord bestow it when and how he pleaseth! I thank God I feel myself in a good degree dead to praise and dispraise. I hope, at least, that it is so; because I do not feel that the one lifts me up, or that the other dejects me. I want to see a pentecost Christian Church; and if it is not to be seen at this time upon earth, I am willing to go and see that glorious wonder in heaven. How is it with you? Are you ready to seize the crown in the name of the Redeemer reigning in your heart? We run a race toward the grave. John is likely to outrun you, unless you have a swift foot. The Lord grant we may sink deeper into the Redeemer’s

grave, and there live and die, and gently glide into our own.

I had lately a letter from one of the preachers, who finds great fault with me for having published, in my book on Perfection, your hymn, called "The Last Wish." He calls it dangerous mysticism. My private thoughts are, that the truth lies between driving Methodism and still mysticism. What think you? Read the addresses which I have added to that piece, and tell me your thoughts.

Let us pray that God would renew our youth as that of the eagle, that we may bear fruit in our old age. The Lord strengthen you to the last! I hope I shall see you before my death: if not, let us rejoice at the thought of meeting in heaven. Give my kind love to Mrs. Wesley, to my god-daughter, and to her brothers, who all, I hope, remember their Creator in the days of their youth. Adieu.

I am, &c.,

J. F.

CXVIII.—TO MR. CHARLES PERRONET.

BRISTOL, *July 12, 1776.*

MY VERY DEAR BROTHER,—Having an opportunity to write a line to you by a friend, whom I meet daily at the Wells, I gladly embrace it to thank you for your last favour. The Lord keeps me hanging by a thread: he weighs me in the balance for life and death; I trust him for the choice. He knows, far better than I, what is best; and I leave all to his unerring wisdom. I am calm, and wait, with submission, what the Lord will say concerning me. I wait to be baptized into all his fulness, and trust the word, "the word of his grace." Afflictions and shakes may be a ploughing necessary to make way for the heavenly seed, and to prepare me to bring forth some fruit in life and in death. Whether it be in the former or in the latter, I hope I shall live and die the object of your love, and the subject of your

prayers, as you are of the cordial affection and good wishes of, my very dear friend, your devoted brother and obliged companion in tribulation,

J. F.

CXIX.—TO JAMES IRELAND, ESQ.

MADELEY, *Aug. 13, 1776.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—My breast is always very weak; but, if it please God, it will in time recover strength. Mr. Greaves will take all the duty upon himself; and I shall continue to take rest, exercise, and the food which was recommended to me. The Lord grant me grace to repose myself on Christ, to exercise myself in charity, and to feed upon the bread of life which God has given us in Jesus Christ. We all need this spiritual regimen: may we be enabled to observe it as strictly as we do the bodily regimen of our earthly physicians!

I thank you, my dear friend, for all your favours, and all your attention to me. Your more than fraternal love covers me with confusion, and fills me with acknowledgment. What return shall I make? I will drink the cup of thanksgiving, and I will bless the name of the Lord; I will thank my dear friend; and wish him all the temporal blessings he conferred upon me, and all those spiritual ones which were not in his power to bestow. Live in health,—live piously, live content, live in Christ,—live for eternity, live to make your wife, your children, your servants, your neighbours happy, as far as their happiness depends on you; and may the God of all grace give back a hundredfold to you and your dear wife all the kindnesses with which you have loaded me! The Lord make you happy as a father, a master, and a Christian! The God of peace be with you without interruption! Give me some account of your health, and I will inform you of the alterations which take place in that of

Your obedient servant and devoted friend, J. F.

CXX.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, *Aug. 24, 1776.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have received the news of your loss, and of the gain of your younger daughter. She has entered into port, and has left you on a tempestuous sea with Fanny. The account of her death did not surprise me: when you received that of her illness, this passage came strongly to my mind, “Two shall be in one house: one shall be taken, and the other left.” I recommend to Mrs. Ireland the resignation of David when he lost his son; and do you give her the example. The day of death is preferable to that of our birth: with respect to infants, the maxim of Solomon is indubitable. O, what an honour is it to be the father and mother of a little cherub, who hovers round the throne of God in heavenly glory! Comfort yourselves, and rejoice that the Lord has taken one, and left the other.

R—q—t dead and buried! The jolly man who last summer shook his head at me as at a dying man! How frail are we! God help us to live to-day! To-morrow is the fool’s day. I am glad you encourage my hopes of finding some at Bristol who will tarry, with one accord, for a pentecostal day of the Son of man. I meet with some, I hope, that feel a want of it; but my constant removals prevent my enjoying the benefit of waiting together in one place. When God shall be about to take away the reproach of his people, he will work a double miracle: his grace will prepare their hearts, and his providence their outward circumstances.

I have not at present the least idea that I am called to quit my post here. I see no probability of being useful in Switzerland. My call is here, I am sure of it: if then I undertook the journey, it would be merely to accompany you. I dare not gratify friendship by taking such a step;

and so much the less, as I have no faith in the prescriptions of your physician; and I think that if health be better for us than sickness, we may enjoy it as well here as in France or Italy. If sickness be best for us, why shun it? Everything is good when it comes from God. Nothing but a baptism of fire, and the most evident openings of Providence, can engage me in such a journey. If you believe that Providence calls you to make it, go, and pass the winter with Mr. Lee: the bare idea that the journey will do you good, may, by God's blessing, be of service to you. If I reject your obliging offer to procure me a substitute, accuse not my friendship to you, but attribute it to my fear of taking a false step, of quitting my post without command, and of engaging in a warfare to which the Lord does not call me. My refusal wounds my friendship for you; but I hope it will not prevent your being persuaded that,

I am, with lively gratitude, altogether yours in Jesus Christ. Adieu.

J. F.

CXXI.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, *Sept. 7, 1776.*

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—I thank you for your kind letter, and am glad you will continue to oppose bigotry, though I would not have you bring an old house about your ears, for the sake of so insignificant a creature as I am. As many who espouse the sentiments of my opponents condemn me without having heard me out, and upon the dreadful charges which they hear brought against me, they are not much to blame; for what good man can think well of a blasphemer, and an enemy to the gospel? I hope, for my part, to do what shall be in my power to remove prejudices, and trust to gain some resignation and patience by what I shall not be able to remove. God is my witness,

that I honour and love them, though I will never part with my liberty of exposing error wherever I shall detect it. Why might I not endeavour to take off a spot from a friend's sleeve, without running the risk of losing his friendship, and incurring his ill-will?

My health is, I thank God, better than when I wrote last. I have not yet preached, rather from a sense of my duty to my friends, and high thoughts of Mr. Greaves's labours, (who does the work of an evangelist to better purpose than I,) than to spare myself; for, if I am not mistaken, I am as able to do my work now, as I was a year ago.

A fortnight ago, I paid a visit to West Bromwich. I ran away from the kindness of my parishioners, who oppressed me with tokens of their love. To me there is nothing so extremely trying as excessive kindness. I am of the king's mind, when the people showed their love to him on his journey to Portsmouth: "I can bear," he said, "the hissings of a London mob; but these shouts of joy are too much for me." You, my dear friend, Mrs. Ireland, Mrs. Norman, and all your family, have put me to that severe trial, to which all trials caused by the hard words that have been spoken of me are nothing. I return you all my warmest thanks, and pray that, excess excepted, you may all meet, in the day of your weakness, as kind nurses and benefactors as you have proved to me.

At our age a recovery can be but a short reprieve: let us, then, give up ourselves daily to the Lord, as people who have no confidence in the flesh, and do not trust to to-morrow. I find my weakness, unprofitableness, and wretchedness daily more and more: and the more I find them, the more help I have to sink into self-abhorrence. Nor do I despair to sink one day so in it as to die to self, and revive in my God. Farewell.

J. F.

CXXII.—TO THE REV. CHARLES WESLEY.

MADELEY, *Sept. 15, 1776.*

MY VERY DEAR BROTHER,—I lately consulted a pious gentleman near Lichfield, famous for his skill in the disorders of the breast. He assured me I am in no immediate danger of a consumption of the lungs; and that my disorder is upon the nerves, in consequence of too much close thinking. He permitted me to write and preach in moderation, and gave me medicines which, I think, are of service in taking off my feverish heats. My spitting of blood is stopped, and I may yet be spared to travel with you as an invalid.

If God adds one inch to my span, I see my calling. I desire to know nothing but Christ, and him crucified, revealed in the Spirit. I long to feel the utmost power of the Spirit's dispensation; and I will endeavour to bear my testimony to the glory of that dispensation, both with my pen and tongue. Some of our injudicious or inattentive friends will probably charge me with novelty for it: but, be that as it will, let us meekly stand for the truth as it is in Jesus, and trust the Lord for everything. I thank God, I feel so dead to popular applause, that I trust I should not be afraid to maintain a truth against all the world; and yet I dread to dissent from any child of God, and feel ready to condescend to every one. O what depths of humble love and what heights of gospel truth do I sometimes see! I want to sink into the former, and rise into the latter. Help me by your example, letters, and prayers; and let us, after our forty years' abode in the wilderness with Moses and Joshua, break forth after our Joshua into the Canaan of pure love. I am, &c.,

J. F.

CXXIII.—TO THE REV. VINCENT PERRONET.

NEWINGTON, *Jan. 19, 1777.*

DEAR FATHER IN CHRIST,—I beg you would accept my multiplied thanks for your repeated favours. You have twice entertained me, a worthless stranger; and, not yet tired of the burden, you kindly invite me, weak and troublesome as I am, to share in the comforts of your house and family. Kind Providence leaves me no room at present to hang a third burden upon you. The good air and accommodations here, and the nearness to a variety of helps, joined to the kindness of my friends, and the weakness of my body, forbid me to remove at present. God reward your labour of love and fatherly offers! Should the Lord raise me, I shall be better able to reap the benefit of your instructions: a pleasure which I promise myself some time, if the Lord pleases.

I have of late thought much upon a method of reconciling the Calvinists and Arminians. I have seen some Calvinian ministers who seem inclined to a plan of pacification. I wish I had strength enough to draw the sketch of it for your improvement. I think the thing is by no means impracticable, if we would but look one another in the face, and fall together at the feet of Him who makes men to be of one mind in one house, and made once all believers to be of one soul in the Church. Let us pray, hope, wait, and be ready to cast one mite of endeavour toward the blessing of a reconciliation; in which none could be more glad to second you, than, honoured and dear sir,

Your affectionate, obliged son in the gospel,

J. F.

CXXIV.—TO MISS PERRONET.

NEWINGTON, *Jan. 19, 1777.*

DEAR MADAM,—I thank you for your care and kind nursing of me when at Shoreham; and especially for the few lines you have favoured me with. They are so much the more agreeable to me, as they treat of the one thing needful for the recovery of our souls; the spirit of power, of love, and of a sound mind; together with our need of it, and the grand promise that this need shall be abundantly supplied, supplied by a baptismal outpouring of that “Spirit of life in Christ Jesus, which makes us free from the law of sin and death.” May we hunger and thirst after righteousness in the Holy Ghost, and we shall be filled. May we so come to our first Paraclete, Advocate, and Comforter, as to receive the second as an indwelling and overflowing fountain of light, life, and love. My view of this mystery is, I trust, Scriptural. The Father so loved the world, as to give us the first Advocate, Paraclete, and Comforter, whom we love and receive as our Redeemer. The first Advocate has told us it was expedient that he should leave us; because, in that case, he would send another Advocate, Paraclete, or Comforter, to abide with us, and be in us forever, as our Sanctifier, our Urim and Thummim, our “lights and perfections,” our “oracle and guide.” This is the grand promise to Christians, called “the promise of the Father,” and brought by the Son. O may it be sealed on our hearts by “the Spirit of promise!” May we ever cry,

“Seal thou our breasts, and let us wear
That pledge of love forever there.”

Then we shall be filled with pure, perfect love; for the love of the Spirit perfects that of the Father and Son, and accomplishes the mystery of God in the believing soul. Come, then, let us look for it; this great salvation draws nigh.

Let us thank God more thankfully, more joyfully, more humbly, more penitently, for Christ our first Comforter; and, hanging on his word, let us ardently pray for the fullness of his Spirit, for the indwelling of our second Comforter, who will lead us into all truth, all love, all power. Let us join the few who besiege the throne of grace, and not give over putting the Lord in remembrance, till he has raised himself a pentecostal Church again in the earth: I mean a church of such believers as are all of one heart and one soul. Nor forget to ask, that when you press into that kingdom and church, you may be followed by,

Dear madam, yours, &c.,

J. F.

CXXV.—TO JAMES IRELAND, ESQ.

NEWINGTON, *Jan. 29, 1777.*

THANKS be to God, and to my dear friend, for favours upon favours, for undeserved love and the most endearing tokens of it. I have received your obliging letters, full of kind offers, and your jar full of excellent grapes. May God open to you the book of life, and seal upon your heart all the offers and promises it contains; and may the treasures of Christ's love, and all the fruits of the Spirit, be abundantly open to my dear friend and unwearied benefactor!

Providence sent me last Sunday Dr. Turner, who, under God, saved my life twenty-three years ago in a dangerous illness; and I am inclined to try what his method will do. He orders me asses' milk, chicken, &c., forbids me riding, and recommends the greatest quietness. He prohibits the use of Bristol water; advises some waters of a purgative nature; and tries to promote expectoration by a method that so far answers, though I spit by it more blood than before. It will be in order to cure one way or other.

With respect to my soul, I find it good to be in the balance, awfully weighed every day for life or death. I

thank God, the latter has lost its sting, and endears to me the Prince of life. But O! I want Christ, my resurrection, to be a thousand times more dear to me; and doubt not he will be so when I am filled with the Spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of him. Let us wait for that glory, praising God for all we have received, and do daily receive; and trusting him for all we have not yet received. Let our faith do justice to his veracity, our hope to his goodness, and our love to all his perfections. It is good to trust in the Lord, and his saints like well to hope in him. I am provided here with every necessary and convenient blessing for my state. The great have even done me the honour of calling: Mr. Shirley, Mr. Rowland Hill, Mr. Peckwell, &c. I exhort them to promote peace in the Church, which they take kindly. I hope God will incline us all to peace, living and dying. Lady Huntingdon has written me a kind letter also. O for universal, lasting kindness! This world to me is now become a world of love. May it be so to my dear friend also. My kindest love and thanks wait on yourself, Mrs. Ireland, and all your dear family.

J. F.

CXXVI.—TO MR. GREENWOOD.

LONDON, —, 1777.

MY DEAR COMPANION IN TRIBULATION, AND IN THE PATIENCE OF JESUS,—Peace be multiplied unto you, and resignation by the cross of Jesus. I bear your foot on my heart, and cast my heart on Him to whom all burdens are lighter than a feather. Pascal said, when the rod of tribulation was upon him, “Now I begin to be a Christian;” meaning, a follower of the Man of sorrows. By his pierced feet may yours be eased. Hold this fast,—“Whom the Lord loveth, he chasteneth.” Accept the rod as a token of your adoption; and be willing to be made perfect in

patience by sufferings. In the mean time, rejoice that Christ's sufferings are over; that they are atoning; and that they have purchased our comforts. If you can come safely to-morrow, you will bring a blessing to your poor pensioner, who remains, in the bonds of grateful, brotherly love,

Yours,

J. F.

CXXVII.—TO JAMES IRELAND, ESQ.

NEWINGTON, *Feb. 24, 1777.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Let us abandon ourselves without reserve to God, who is alike the God of all grace when he chastises as when he blesses us. Be a son of Abraham; be an imitator of God. Abraham refused not to offer up his Isaac, and God has delivered his only Son to death for us. Refuse nothing to this God of love and tender compassion. The sacrifice of those things which are most precious to us are the least unworthy of him; and had we a thousand Isaacs, we ought to keep back none from him. Perhaps the Lord hath heard your prayer and ours. If your Isaac lives, may he be devoted to the Lord as was Samuel; and may the God of Elijah have all the glory of his recovery! If he be dead, prepare to follow him, and do not envy him the sweet repose which he enjoys, and in which we shall soon share with him.

Adieu. They forbid my writing: but I will write to the last,—“Blessed be God, who giveth us the victory over death and its pains by Jesus Christ!” In him I am, and shall always be, altogether yours.

I am your ten thousand times obliged friend,

J. F.

P. S. Your second letter, which reached me when the above was written, informs me of your loss;—but why should I call God's securing your son, and giving him eternal life, your loss? It is Christ's gain, who sees in that sweet child

the travail of his childhood ; and it is your son's gain, since his conflicts and dangers are now over, and nothing awaits him but an eternal increase of happiness. Who knows but what God, who foresees all the storms of corruption and rocks of sin we are likely to meet with in the sea of life, has taken your dear child at the best, and by this premature death secures him from eternal death ? Come, then, do not repine. God has made you the instrument of adding one more little cherub to the heavenly host ; and in this light you may well say, "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, and blessed be the name of the Lord !" He is better than ten sons. Your son is in his bosom ; and this new cord should now draw you from earth to heaven with a fresh degree of power,—with an irresistible attraction.

I thank you ten thousand times over for all your repeated marks of love and generosity to me and mine : the burden is too great to bear ; I must cast it upon Him who can bless you ten thousand times over, and turn all your seeming losses into the greatest blessings. May the God of all consolation help you to reap the earliest and ripest fruit of the affliction, whereby he gives you a new token of your adoption. Remember my kind love, and present my best thanks to Mrs. Ireland. Yours, &c.,

J. F.

CXXVIII.—TO MISS PERRONET.

NEWINGTON, *April* 21, 1777.

MY DEAR FRIEND—A thousand thanks to you for your kind, comfortable lines. The prospect of going to see Jesus and his glorified members, and among them your dear departed brother, my now ever-living friend ; this sweet prospect is enough to make me quietly and joyfully submit to leave all my Shoreham friends, and all the excellent ones of the earth. But why do I talk of going to leave any of

Christ's members, by going to be more intimately united to the Head ?

“ We all are one who him receive,
And each with each agree ;
In him the One, the Truth, we live,
Blest point of unity !”

a point this which fills heaven and earth,—which runs through time and eternity. What an immense point ! In it sickness is lost in health, and death in life. There let us ever meet. There “ to live is Christ, and to die gain.”

I cannot tell you how much I am obliged to your dear brother, for all his kind brotherly attendance as a physician. He has given me his time, his long walks, his remedies. He has brought me Dr. Turner several times, and will not so much as allow me to reimburse his expenses. Help me to thank him for all his profusion of love ; for I cannot sufficiently do it myself. My duty to your father : I throw myself in spirit at his feet, and ask his blessing, and an interest in his prayers. Tell him, that the Lord is gracious to me ; does not suffer the enemy to disturb my peace ; and gives me in prospect the victory over death. Thanks be to God, who giveth us this great victory through our Lord Jesus Christ ! Absolute resignation to the divine will baffles a thousand temptations, and confidence in our Saviour carries us sweetly through a thousand trials. God fill us abundantly with both !

Thank dear Mrs. Bissaker for all her love to my dear departed friend ; and may our kindred spirits drink deeper into God, till they are filled with all the fulness which our enlarged souls can admit. Nor let your niece, to whom I send my thanks, keep aloof. Let us all tend to our original centre, and experience that life and death are ours, because the Prince of life, who is our resurrection and life, has overcome sin, death, and the grave for you, and for

Your obliged, unworthy brother,

J. F.

CXXIX.—TO MR. AND MRS. GREENWOOD.

BRISLINGTON, *May 28, 1777.*

MY VERY DEAR FRIENDS AND BENEFACTORS, CHARLES AND MARY GREENWOOD,—My prayers shall always be, that the merciful may find mercy; and that the great kindness I have found under your quiet roof may be showed you everywhere under the canopy of heaven. I think with grateful joy on the days of calm retreat I have been blessed with at Newington; and lament my not having improved better the opportunity of sitting, like Mary, at the feet of my great Physician. May he requite your kind care to a dying worm, by abundantly caring for you and yours, and making all your bed in your sickness! May you enjoy full health! May you hunger and thirst after righteousness, both that of Christ and that of the Holy Ghost, and be abundantly filled therewith! May his rod and staff comfort you under all the troubles of life, the decays of the body, the assaults of the enemy, and the pangs of death! May the reviving cordials of the word of truth be ever within the reach of your faith! and may your eager faith make a ready and constant use of them, especially when faintings come upon you, and your hands begin to hang down! May you stand in the clefts of the Rock of ages, and there be safely sheltered when all the storms of justice shall fall around! May you have always such temporal and spiritual helps, friends, and comforts, as I have found in your pleasing retreat!

You have received a poor Lazarus, though his sores were not visible. You have had compassion, like the good Samaritan; you have admitted me to the enjoyment of your best things; and he that did not deserve to have the dogs to lick his sores, has always found the members of Jesus ready to prevent, to remove, or to bear his burdens. And

now what shall I say? What but, "Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gift!" and thanks be to my dear friends for all their favours! They will, I trust, be found faithfully recorded in my breast, when the great Rewarder of those who diligently seek him "will render to every man according to his works." Then shall a raised Lazarus appear in the gate to testify of the love of Charles and Mary Greenwood, and of their godly sister.

I thought myself a little better last Sunday; but I have since spit more blood than I had done for weeks before. Glory be to God for every providence! His will be done in me, by health or sickness, by life or death. All from him is, and I trust will always be, welcome to

Your obliged pensioner,

J. F.

CXXX.—TO THE SAME.

1777.

TEN thousand blessings light upon the heads and hearts of my dear benefactors, Charles and Mary Greenwood! May their quiet retreat at Newington become a Bethel to them! May their offspring be born again there! And may the choicest consolations of the Spirit visit their minds whenever they retire thither from the busy city! Their poor pensioner travels on, though slowly, toward the grave. His journey to the sea seems to him to have hastened, rather than retarded, his progress to his old mother earth. May every providential blast blow him nearer to the heavenly haven of his Saviour's breast, where he hopes one day to meet all his benefactors, and among them those whom he now addresses. O my dear friends, what shall I render? what to Jesus? what to you? May He who invites the heavy laden take upon him all the burdens of kindness you have heaped on your Lazarus! And may angels, when you die, find me

in Abraham's bosom, and bring you into mine, that, by all the kindness which may be shown in heaven, I may try to requite that you have shown to

Your obliged brother, J. F.

CXXXI.—TO MRS. THORNTON.

BRISLINGTON, —, 1777.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—I shall not attempt to express my gratitude to you for all your charitable care of a poor sickly worm. As we say, that silence speaks often best the praises of our great Benefactor, so I must say here. I hope these lines will find you leaving the things that are behind, and pressing forward toward the mark, the prize of our high calling on earth. In heaven we are called to be filled with all we can hold of the glorious fulness of God, and what that is we know not, but we shall know, if we follow on to know the Lord. But here also we are called to be filled with all the fulness of God. God is love, you know; to be filled with all his fulness, is, then, to be filled with love. O may that love be shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost given to us, and abiding in us! I still look for that ineffable fulness; and I beg, if you have not yet attained it, you would let nothing damp your hope and slack your pursuit.

I spend more time in giving my friends an account of my health than the matter is worth. You will see by the enclosed, which I beg you would send to the post, when you have showed it to Mr. John and Charles Wesley, if they think it worth their while to run it over, to see how their poor servant does.

I am going to do by my poor sister what you have done by me; I mean, try to smooth the road of sickness to the chamber of death. Gratitude and blood call me to it: you have done it without such calls. Your brotherly

kindness is freer than mine ; but not so free as the love of Jesus, who took upon him our nature, that he might bear our infirmities, die our death, and make over to us his resurrection and his life, after all we have done to render life hateful and death horrible to him. O, for this matchless love, let rocks and hills, let hearts and tongues, break an ungrateful silence ; and let your Christian muse find new anthems, and your poetic heart new flights of eloquence and thankfulness. You partly owe me, by promise, a piece of poetry, on joy in redeeming and sanctifying love. May the Spirit of praise assist you mightily in the noble work ! Maintain the frame of poetic Christian joy, by using all your talents of grace and nature to embrace and show forth his goodness.

I shall be glad to hear from you in Switzerland ; and shall doubly rejoice, if you can send me word that she, who is joined to the Lord according to the glory of the new covenant, is one spirit with him, and enjoys all the glorious liberty of the children of God ! The God of peace be with you all !

I am, my dear friend, &c.,

J. F.

CXXXII.—TO THE SAME.

BRISLINGTON, —, 1777.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—You should have heard from me, if sometimes want of spirits to hold a pen, and for some days want of paper, had not stood in the way of my inclination. Now I have paper and a degree of strength, how can I employ both better, than in trying to fulfil with my pen the great commandment, which contains my duty to God and my neighbour ? But what can a pen do here ? It can just testify what my heart feels ; that no words can describe what I owe to my heavenly Benefactor, to my earthly friends, and to you in particular, who have had so much

patience as to stand by me, and bear a share in my burdens, for so many months, at home and abroad.

What shall I say? Thanks be to God for his unspeakable gifts, for Jesus, for the Spirit of Jesus, for the members of Jesus's mystical body; and in particular am I bound to return thanks for those who have ministered, and still do minister, to my wants, and share in my infirmities. Your meek humility forbids my saying, that among the many who, for Christ's sake, have debased themselves so far as to take up my cross with me, and help me to bear it after my Lord, you stand in the first rank, and the first-fruits of my gratitude are due to you. Simon of Cyrene bore our Lord's cross by compulsion: you have borne that of the most unworthy of his servants without compulsion. And now, what shall I render? A silent tear whispers, "I can render nothing." May the merciful, faithful God, who has promised that a cup of cold water given to the least of his followers, shall not lose its reward; may that omnipotent God, who sees you in all the states of weakness which await you between the present moment and the hour of death, give you all that can make your life comfortable, your trials tolerable, your death triumphant, and your eternity glorious!

What I ask for you, I also peculiarly beg for your dear brother and sister, who have vouchsafed to bind so dry, so insignificant, (I had almost said, so rotten,) a stick as myself, in the bundle of that love with which they embrace the poor, the lame, the helpless, the loathsome, and those who have their sores without, as Lazarus, or within, as I. May we all be found bound up together in the bundle of life, light, and love, with our Lord! And when he shall make up his jewels, may you all shine among his diamonds of the finest water and the first magnitude!

You want, possibly, to know how I go on. Though I am not worth a line, I shall observe, to the glory of my

patient, merciful Preserver and Redeemer, that I am kept in sweet peace, and am looking for the triumphant joy of my Lord, and for the fulness expressed in these words, which sweetly filled the sleepless hours of last night,—

“ Drawn, and redeem’d, and seal’d,
I bless the One and Three;
With Father, Son, and Spirit fill’d
To all eternity !”

With respect to my body, I sleep less, and spit more blood, than I did when you were here, nor can I bear the least trot of an easy horse. If this continues many days, instead of thinking to go and see my friends on the continent, I shall turn my steps to my earthly home, to be ready to lay my bones in my church-yard; and in such a case, I shall put you in mind of your kind promise, that you would do to the last the office of a guardian angel, hold up my hands in my last conflict, and close my eyes when it is over. Two of my parishioners came to convey me safe home, and had persuaded me to go with them in a post-chaise; but I had so bad a night before the day I was to set out, that I gave it up.

My prospects and ways are shut up, so that I have nothing to look at but Jesus and the grave. May I so look at them, as to live in my resurrection and my life, and die in all the meekness and holiness of my Lord and my all! I humbly request a continued interest in your fervent prayers, that I may be found completely ready when my Lord’s messenger shall come for my soul. Adieu, my dear friend. God bless and reward you.

I am your most affectionate friend and brother,

J. F.

CXXXIII.—TO THE RIGHT HON. LADY MARY
FITZGERALD.MADELEY, *Oct. 21, 1777.*

HONOURED AND DEAR MADAM,—The honour of your Christian letter humbles me; and the idea of your taking half a dozen steps, much more that of your taking a journey, to consult so mean a creature, lays me in the dust. My brothers and sisters invite me to breathe once more my natal air, and the physicians recommend to me a journey to the continent. I wait for the last intimations of Providence to determine me to go. If I do, I shall probably pass through London; and in that case I could have the honour of waiting upon you. I say probably, because I should only follow my friend, and a serious family which goes to spend the winter in the south of France, or in Spain; and I do not yet know whether they design to embark at Dover, or at some port in the west of England. They have all taken a journey, and at their return I shall know their determination, and be able to fix the time when I might have it in my power to wait upon you, madam, either at your house, or at our dear friend's in St. James's Place.

With respect to the hints you drop in your letter concerning your external circumstances, I find it upon my heart to say, Abide in the state in which you have been called, till Providence makes a way for you to escape out of what may be contrary to your new taste. Your cross has changed its nature with your heart; and we may, in some cases, be called to take up a worldly as well as a heavenly cross. Joseph and Moses did so once in Egypt, Esther in Susa, Daniel in Babylon, John the Baptist at Herod's court, and our Lord in the house of the rich Pharisee. Some great end, to yourself or to others, may be answered by patiently bearing your worldly cross till

it be taken from you, or you are removed from under it. Continue to make it matter of earnest prayer to know the will of God concerning you; and while your eye watches the motions of the providential cloud, and your heart listens for the Lord's call, endeavour to keep your will as an even balance at his feet, that the least grain of intimation, clear intimation from him, and the least distinct touch of the hand of Providence, may turn the scale either way, without resistance on your part. Being thus fully persuaded, you will do and suffer all with the liberty and courage of faith.

You have been afflicted, as well as dear Mrs. G——, Mrs. L——, and myself. May our maladies yield the peaceable fruits of righteousness, complete deadness to the world, and increased faith in the mercy, love, and power of Him who supports under the greatest trials, and can make our extremity of weakness an opportunity of displaying the freeness of his grace, and the greatness of his power. Give my duty and thanks to them, and tell them, that I salute them under the cross with the sympathy of a companion in tribulation, and rejoice at the thought of doing it, where the cross shall be exchanged for the crown. In the mean time, let us glory in the cross of our common Head; and firmly believe that he is exalted to give us whatever is best for us in life, in death, and forever.

I have taken the bark for some days, and it seems to have been blessed to the removal of my spitting blood. Time will decide whether it be a real removal, or only a suspension, of that symptom. Either will prove a blessing, as His will is our health. To live singly to God, the best method is to desire it in meekness; to spread the desire in quietness before Him who inspireth it; to offer him now all we have and are as we can; and to open our mouth of expectation wide, that he may either fill it

with good things with all his fulness, or that he may try our patience, and teach us to know our total helplessness. With respect to the weeping frame of repentance, and the joyous one of faith, they are both good alternately: but the latter is the better of the two, because it enables us to do, and suffer, and praise, which honours Christ more: both are happily mixed. May they be so in you, madam, and in

Your unworthy and obliged servant,

J. F.

CXXXIV.—TO THE REV. MESSRS. JOHN AND
CHARLES WESLEY.

MACON, IN BURGUNDY, *May 17, 1778.*

REV. AND DEAR SIRS,—I hope that while I lie by, like a broken vessel, the Lord continues to renew your vigour, and sends you to water his vineyard, and to stand in the gap against error and vice. I have recovered some strength, blessed be God, since I came to the continent; but have lately had another attack of my old complaints. However, I find myself better again, though I think it yet advisable not to speak in public.

I preached twice at Marseilles, but was not permitted to follow the blow. There are a few noble, inquisitive Bereans in these parts. The ministers in the town of my nativity have been very civil; they have offered me the pulpit; but I fear, if I could accept the offer, it would soon be recalled. I am loath to quit this part of the field without casting a stone at that giant, sin, who stalks about with uncommon boldness. I shall therefore stay some months longer, to see if the Lord will please to give me a little more strength to venture an attack.

Gaming and dress, sinful pleasure and love of money, unbelief and false philosophy, lightness of spirit, fear of man, and love of the world, are the principal sins by which

Satan binds his captives in these parts. Materialism is not rare ; deism and Socinianism are very common ; and a set of free-thinkers—great admirers of Voltaire and Rousseau, Bayley and Mirabeau—seem bent upon destroying Christianity and government. “With one hand,” said a lawyer, who has written something against them, “they shake the throne, and with the other they throw down the altars.” If we believe them, the world is the dupe of kings and priests ; religion is fanaticism and superstition ; subordination is slavery and tyranny. Christian morality is absurd, unnatural, and impracticable ; and Christianity the most bloody religion that ever was. And here it is certain, that by the example of “Christians,” so called, and by our continual disputes, they have a great advantage, and do the truth immense mischief. Popery will certainly fall in France, in this or the next century ; and, I make no doubt, God will use those vain men to bring about a reformation here, as he used Henry the Eighth to do that work in England : so the madness of his enemies shall at last turn to his praise, and to the furtherance of his kingdom.

In the mean time, it becomes all lovers of the truth to make their heavenly tempers, and humble, peaceful love, to shine before all men, that those mighty adversaries, seeing the good works of professors, may glorify their Father who is in heaven, and no more blaspheme that worthy name by which we are all called “Christians.”

If you ask what system these men adopt, I answer that some build on deism, a morality founded on self-preservation, self-interest, and self-honour. Others laugh at all morality, except that which, being neglected, violently disturbs society ; and external order is the decent covering of fatalism, while materialism is their system.

O, dear sirs, let me entreat you, in these dangerous days, to use your wide influence with unabated zeal against the scheme of these modern Celsuses, Porphyries, and Julians,

by calling all professors to think and speak the same things ; to love and embrace one another ; and to stand firmly embodied to resist those daring men, many of whom are already in England, headed by the admirers of Mr. Hume and Mr. Hobbes. But it is needless to say this to those who have made, and continue to make, such a stand for vital Christianity ; so that I have nothing to do but pray that the Lord would abundantly support and strengthen you to the last, and make you a continued comfort to his enlightened people, loving reprovers of those who mix light and darkness, and a terror to the perverse : and this is the cordial prayer of, reverend and dear sirs,

Your affectionate son and obliged servant in the gospel,
J. F.

P. S. I need not tell you, sirs, that the hour in which Providence shall make my way plain to return to England, to unite with the happy number of those who feel or seek the power of Christian godliness, will be welcome to me. O favoured Britons ! Happy would it be for them, if they knew their gospel privileges ! My relations in Adam are all very kind to me ; but the spiritual relations whom God has raised me in England exceed them yet. Thanks be to Christ, and to his blasphemed religion !

CXXXV.—TO THE REV. DR. CONYERS.

MACON, IN BURGUNDY, *May 18, 1778.*

HON. AND DEAR SIR,—I left orders with a friend to send you a little book, called “The Reconciliation ;” in which I endeavour to bring nearer the children of God, who are divided about their partial views of divine truths. I do not know whether that tract has, in any degree, answered its design ; but I believe truth can be reconciled with itself, and the candid children of God one with another. O that some

abler hand and more loving heart would undertake to mend my plan, if it be worth mending, or draw one more agreeable to the word of God! My eyes are upon you, dear sir, and those who are like-minded with you, for this work. Disappoint me not of my hope. Stand forth, and make way for reconciling love, by removing, so far as lies in you, what is in the way of brotherly union. O, sir, the work is worthy of you! and if you saw with what boldness the false philosophers of the Continent, who are the apostles of the age, attack Christianity, and represent it as one of the worst religions in the world, and fit only to make the professors of it murder one another, or, at least, to contend among themselves, and how they urge our disputes to make the gospel of Christ the jest of nations, and the abhorrence of all flesh, you would break through your natural timidity, and invite all our brethren in the ministry to do what the herds do on the Swiss mountains, when wolves attack them; instead of goring one another, they unite, form a close battalion, and face the common enemy on all sides. What a shame would it be if cows and bulls showed more prudence, and more regard for union, than Christians and gospel ministers!

O, dear sir, take courage! Be bold for the reconciling truth. Be bold for peace. You can do all things, through Christ strengthening you; and, as Doctor Conyers, you can do many things,—a great many more than you think. What if you go, sir, in Christ's name, to all the gospel ministers of your acquaintance, exhort them as a father, entreat them as a brother, and bring them, or as many of them as you can, together! think you that your labour would be in vain in the Lord? Impossible, sir! O despair not! "Charity hopeth all things," and, as Kempis saith, "it trieth all things; and bringeth many things to pass which would appear impossible to him who despaireth, hateth, or careth not for the sheep."

If you want a coach, or a friend to accompany you, when you go upon this errand of love, remember there is a Thornton in London, and an Ireland in Bristol, who will wish you God speed, and make your way plain before you; and God will raise many more to concur in the peaceful work. Let me humbly entreat you to go to work and to persevere in it. I wish I had strength to be, at least, your postilion when you go. I would drive, if not like Jehu, at least with some degree of cheerful swiftness, while Christ smiled on the Christian attempt. But I am confident you can do all in the absence, and without the concurrence, of him who is, with brotherly love and dutiful respect, honoured and dear sir,

Your obedient servant in the gospel,

J. F.

CXXXVI.—TO MR. WILLIAM PERRONET.

NYON, *June 2, 1778.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—When I wrote to you last, I mentioned two ladies of your family, who have married two brothers, Messrs. Monod. Since that time, they have requested me to send to your father the enclosed memorial, which I hope will prove of use to your family. As the bad writing and the language may make the understanding of it difficult to you, I send you the substance of it, and of the letter of the ladies' lawyer.

While I invite you to make your title clear to a precarious estate on earth, permit me, my dear sir, to remind you of the heavenly inheritance entailed on believers. The will—the New Testament—by which we can recover it, is proved. The court is just and equitable, the Judge is gracious and loving. To enter into possession of a part of the estate here, and of the whole hereafter, we need only believe, and prove evangelically that we are believers. Let us then set about it now with earnestness, with perse-

verance, and with a full assurance, that, through grace, we shall infallibly carry our cause. Alas! what are estates and crowns to grace and glory! The Lord grant that we and all our friends may choose the better part, which your brother, my dear friend, so happily chose. And may we firmly stand to the choice, as he did to the last. My best respects wait upon your dear father, your sisters, and nieces. God reward your kindness to me upon them all!

I have had a pull-back since I wrote last. After I left Mr. Ireland at Macon, to shorten my journey and enjoy new prospects, I ventured to cross the mountains which separate France from this country. But on the third day of the journey I found an unexpected trial: a large hill, whose winding roads were so steep, that though we fed the horses with bread and wine, they could scarcely draw the chaise, obliged me to walk in all the steepest places. The climbing lasted several hours, the sun was hot, I perspired violently, and the next day I spit blood again. I have chiefly kept to goats' milk ever since, and hope I shall get over this death also, because I find myself, blessed be God, better again, and my cough is neither frequent nor violent.

This is a delightful country. If you come to see it, and claim the estate, bring all the papers and memorials your father can collect, and come to share a pleasant apartment, and one of the finest prospects in the world, in the house where I was born. God bless you, my dear friend! Believe me, dear sir, &c.,

J. F.

CXXXVII.—TO JAMES IRELAND, ESQ.

NYON, *July 15, 1778.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I have ventured to preach once, and to expound once in the church. Our ministers are very kind, and preach to the purpose: a young one of this town

gave us lately a very excellent gospel sermon. Grown-up people stand fast in their stupidity, or in their self-righteousness. The day I preached, I met with some children in my wood, walking or gathering strawberries. I spoke to them about our Father, our common Father. We felt a touch of brotherly affection. They said they would sing to their Father, as well as the birds; and followed me, attempting to make such melody as you know is commonly made in these parts. I outrode them, but some of them had the patience to follow me home, and said they would speak with me; but the people of the house stopped them, saying, I would not be troubled with children. They cried, and said they were sure I would not say so, for I was their good brother. The next day, when I heard it, I inquired after them, and invited them to come to me; which they have done every day since. I make them little hymns, which they sing. Some of them are under sweet drawings. Yesterday I wept for joy on hearing one speak of conviction of sin, and joy unspeakable in Christ which had followed, as would do an experienced believer in Bristol. Last Sunday I met them in the wood: there were one hundred of them, and as many adults. Our first pastor has since desired me to desist from preaching in the wood, (for I had exhorted,) for fear of giving umbrage; and I have complied, from a concurrence of circumstances which are not worth mentioning. I therefore meet them in my father's yard.

In one of my letters, I promised you some anecdotes concerning the death of our two great philosophers, Voltaire and Rousseau. M. Tronchin, the physician of the Duke of Orleans, being sent for to attend Voltaire in his illness at Paris, Voltaire said to him, "Sir, I desire you would save my life. I will give you the half of my fortune if you lengthen out my days only for six months. If not, I shall go to the devil, and shall carry you away along with me."

Mr. Rousseau died more decently, as full of himself as Voltaire was of the wicked one. He paid that attention to nature, and the natural sun, which the Christian pays to grace, and the Sun of righteousness. These are some of his last words to his wife, which I copy from a printed letter circulating in these parts. "Open the window, that I may see the green fields once more. How beautiful is nature! How wonderful is the sun! See that glorious light it sends forth! It is God who calls me. How pleasing is death to a man who is not conscious of any sin! O God, my soul is now as pure as when it first came out of thy hands: crown it with thy heavenly bliss!" God deliver us from self and Satan, the internal and external fiend! The Lord forbid we should fall into the snare of the Sadducees, with the former of those two famous men, or into that of the Pharisees with the latter. Farewell in Jesus.

J. F.

CXXXVIII.—TO THE SAME.

NYON, *Sept.* 15, 1778.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am just returned from an excursion I made with my brother, through the fine vale in the midst of the high hills which divide France from this country. In that vale we found three lakes, one on French ground, and two on Swiss; the largest is six miles long and two wide. It is the part of the country where industry is most apparent, and where population thrives best. The inhabitants are chiefly woodmen, coopers, watchmakers, and jewellers. They told me they had the best singing and the best preacher in the country. I asked, if any sinners were converted under his ministry. They stared, and asked what I meant by conversion. When I had explained myself, they said we did not live in the time of miracles.

I was better satisfied in passing through a part of the vale which belongs to the king of France. I saw a prodi-

gious concourse of people, and supposed they kept a fair, but was agreeably surprised to find it was three missionaries, who went about as itinerant preachers to help the regular clergy. They had been there already some days, and were three brothers, who preached morning and evening. The evening service opened by what they called "a conference." One of the missionaries took the pulpit, and the parish priest proposed questions to him, which he answered at full length, and in a very edifying manner. The subject was the unlawfulness and the mischief of those methods, by which persons of different sexes lay snares for each other, and corrupt each other's morals. The subject was treated with delicacy, propriety, and truth. The method was admirably well calculated to draw and fix the attention of a mixed multitude. This conference being ended, another missionary took the pulpit. His text was our Lord's description of the day of judgment. Before the sermon, all those who for the press could kneel, did, and sung a French hymn, to beg a blessing upon the word: and indeed it was blessed. An awful attention was visible upon most; and for a good part of the discourse, the voice of the preacher was almost lost in the cries and bitter wailings of the audience. When the outcry began, the preacher was describing the departure of the wicked into eternal fire. They urged that God was merciful, and that Jesus Christ had shed his blood for them. "But that mercy you have slighted," replies the Judge, "and now is the time of justice: that blood you have trodden under foot, and now it cries for vengeance. Know your day; slight the Father's mercy and the Son's blood no longer." I have seen but once or twice congregations as much affected in England.

One of our ministers being ill, I ventured a second time into the pulpit last Sunday; and the Sunday before I preached six miles off to two thousand people in a jail-yard, where they were come to see a poor murderer

two days before his execution. I was a little abused by the bailiff on the occasion, and refused the liberty of attending the poor man to the scaffold, where he was to be broken on the wheel. I hope he died penitent. The day before he suffered, he said he had broken his irons; and that, as he deserved to die, he desired new ones to be put on, lest he should be tempted to make his escape a second time.

You ask what I design to do. I propose, if it be the Lord's will, to spend a winter here, to bear my testimony against the trade of my countrymen, which Voltaire describes thus:—

*“Barbares, dont la guerre est l'unique métier,
Et qui vendent leur sang à qui veut le payer.”*

In the spring, I shall, if nothing prevents, return to England with you, or with Mr. Perronet, if his affairs are settled, or alone, if other ways fail. In the mean while, I rejoice with you in Jesus, and in the glorious hope of that complete salvation his faithfulness has promised, and his power can never be at a loss to bestow. We must be saved by faith and hope, till we are saved by perfect love, and made partakers of heavenly glory.

I am truly a stranger here. Well then, as strangers, let us go where we shall meet the assembly of the righteous gathered in Jesus. Farewell in him, you and yours.

J. F.

CXXXIX.—TO THE SAME.

NON, Feb. 2, 1779.

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am sorry to hear that you are still tried by illness; but our good heavenly Father will have us to live with one foot on earth, and the other in the stirrup of our infirmities, ready to mount, and pass from time into eternity. He is wise: his will be done, his name praised, and our souls saved, though it be by the skin of our teeth.

I am better, thank God, and ride out every day when the slippery roads will permit me to venture without the risk of breaking my horse's legs and my own neck. You will ask me how I have spent my time. I pray, have patience, rejoice, and write when I can. I saw wood in the house when I cannot go out, and eat grapes, of which I have always a basket by me. Our little lord-lieutenant has forbidden the ministers to let me exhort in the parsonage, because it is the sovereign's house. My second brother has addressed a memorial to him, in which he informs him, that he will give up neither his religious nor civil liberty, and will open his house for the word of God; and accordingly we have since met at his house. On Sunday we met at the young clergyman's, who, on his part, writes against the conduct of the clergy; but I fear we fence against a wall of brass. However, I am quite persuaded that Providence calls me to leave a testimony to my French brethren, and it may be of some use when I shall be no more. I have been comforted by seeing the apology of a minister at Yverdon, who was persecuted in the beginning of this century, under the name of "pietist." I have got acquainted with a faithful minister of Geneva; but he dares no more offer me his pulpit than my brother-in-law at Lausanne.

The Lord was not in the forwardness of the young man I mentioned. It was but a fire of straw, and he has now avoided me for some weeks. Several young women seem to have received the word in the love of it; and four or five grown up ones; but not one man, except the young hopeful clergyman I mention, who helps me at my little meetings, and begins to preach extempore. I hope he will stand his ground better than he who was such an approver when you were here, and is now dying, after having been drawn back to the world.

The truths I chiefly insist upon, when I talk to the peo-

ple who will hear me, are those which I feed upon myself, as my daily bread,—“God, our Maker and Preserver, though invisible, is here and everywhere. He is our chief good, because all beauty and all goodness centres in and flows from him. He is especially love; and love in us, being his image, is the sum and substance of all moral and spiritual excellence,—of all true and lasting bliss. In Adam we are all estranged from love and from God; but the second Adam, Jesus, Emmanuel, God with us, is come to make us know and enjoy again our God, as the God of love and the chief good. All who receive Jesus, receive power to become the sons of God,” &c., &c.

I hope I shall be able to set out for England with Mr. Perronet, in April or May. O that I may find that dear island in peace within and without! Well, I hope you make peace in the Church, if you cannot make peace with the patriots. God is a good God. Do you know, the coats and shoes you gave me have lasted all this while, and are yet good; so that I need not draw upon your banker. Thank God and you for a thousand favours! God bless and comfort you, my dear friend! We are poor creatures; but we have a good God to cast all our burdens upon, and who often burdens us, that we may have our constant and free recourse to his bounty, power, and faithfulness. Stand fast in the faith. Believe lovingly, and all will be well. Farewell.

J. F.

CXL.—TO MR. CHARLES GREENWOOD.

NYON, *May 22, 1779.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I am yet alive, able to ride out, and now and then to instruct a few children. I hope Mr. Perronet will soon have settled his affairs, and then, please God, I shall inform you, by word of mouth, how much I am indebted to you, Mrs. Greenwood, and Mrs. Thornton.

I know it so much the more now, as I have made trial of the kindness of my relations in Adam: those in Christ exceed them as far, in my account, as grace does nature. Thank and salute them earnestly from me; and to those of your own household, please to add Mr. John and Charles Wesley, Dr. Coke, Mr. Atlay, &c. That the Lord would fill you all with his choicest blessings, as you have done me, is, my dear friend, the earnest prayer of

Your poor pensioner, J. F.

P. S. Mr. Perronet wants me to fill up his letter: I would gladly do it, with thanks to God for his unspeakable gifts,—his Son, his Spirit, and his word! And thanks be to his people for their kindness toward the poor, the sick, the stranger, and especially toward me! But at this time, a sleepless night, and a constant tooth-ache, unfit me for almost everything, but lying down under the cross, kissing the rod, and rejoicing in hope of a better state in this world or in the next. But, perhaps, weakness and pain are the best for me in this world. Well, the Lord will choose for me; and I fully set my heart and seal to his choice. Let us not faint in the day of adversity. The Lord tries us, that our faith may be found purged of all the dross of self-will, and may work by that love which beareth all things, and thinketh evil of nothing. Our calling is to follow the Crucified; and we must be crucified with him, until body and soul know the power of his resurrection, and pain and death are done away.

I hope my dear friend will make, with me, a constant choice of the following mottoes of St. Paul: "Christ is gain in life and death,"—"Our life is hid with Christ in God,"—"If we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him,"—"We glory in tribulation,"—"God will give us rest with Christ, in that day,"—"We are saved by hope;" and that Miss Thornton will always, by word and deed, stand to her

motto, and rejoice in the Lord our God, Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. To him let us give glory in the fires. Amen.

CXLI.—TO MESSRS. HARE, TERRY, FOX, AND GOOD, AT HULL; AND MESSRS. PRESTON, SIMPSON, AND RAMSDEN, AT YORK.

LONDON, *Nov.* 12, 1779.

MY DEAR BRETHREN,—I thank you for your kind letters and invitations to visit you, and the brethren about you, should the Lord raise me to any degree of my former strength. I have often found an attraction to my companions in tribulation in Yorkshire. My desire was indeed a little selfish: I wanted to improve by the conversation of my unknown brethren. If God bids me be strong again out of weakness, I shall be glad to try if he will be pleased to comfort us by the mutual faith both of you and me. My desire is, that Christ may be glorified both in my life and death. I am glad you wish that the power of godliness may flourish among the professors of the faith. If I have any desire to live at any time, God is my witness that it is principally to be a witness in word and deed of the dispensation of power from on high; and to point out that kingdom which does not consist in word, but in power, even in righteousness, peace, and joy by the Holy Ghost, the Spirit of power. I am writing an essay upon that important part of the Christian doctrine, and hope that it will be a mite in the treasury of truth, which the Lord has opened for the use of his people.

Should I be spared to visit you, the keep of a horse, and the poor rider, will be all the burden that I should lay on you; and that will be more than my heavenly Master indulged himself in. I am just setting out for Norwich with Mr. Wesley, whose renewed strength and immense

labours astonish me. What a pattern for preachers ! His redeeming the time is, if I mistake not, matchless.

Should I never have the pleasure of thanking you in person, for your brotherly regard, I beg you will all endeavour to meet me in the kingdom of our Father, where distance of time and place is lost in the fulness of Him that is all in all. The way ye know, the penitential way of a heartfelt faith working by obedient love. In that good, though narrow way, I trust you will help, by your prayers and example, my dear brethren, your affectionate brother and willing servant in Christ,

J. F.

CXLII.—TO A NOBLEMAN.

NYON, *Dec. 15, 1779.*

MY LORD,—If the American Colonies and the West-India Islands are rent from the crown, there will not grow one ear of corn the less in Great Britain. We shall still have the necessaries of life, and, what is more, the gospel, and liberty to hear it. If the great springs of trade and wealth are cut off, good men will bear that loss without much sorrow ; for springs of wealth are always springs of luxury, which, sooner or later, destroy the empires corrupted by wealth. Moral good may come out of our losses : I wish you may see it in England. People on the continent imagine they see it already in the English on their travels, who are said to behave with more wisdom and less haughtiness than they were used to do.

Last year saw the death of three great men of these parts—Rousseau, Voltaire, and Baron Haller, a senator of Berne. The last, who is not much known, I think, in England, was a great philosopher, a profound politician, and an agreeable poet ; but he was particularly famous for his skill in botany, anatomy, and physic. He has enriched the republic of letters by such a number of publications in

Latin and German, that the catalogue of them is alone a pamphlet.

This truly great man has given another proof of the truth of Lord Bacon's assertion, that "although smatterers in philosophy are often impious, true philosophers are always religious." I have met with an old, pious, apostolic clergyman, who was intimate with the baron, and used to accompany him over the Alps, in his rambles after the wonders of nature. "With what pleasure," said the minister, "did we admire and adore the wisdom of the God of nature, and sanctify our researches by the sweet praises of the God of grace!"

When the emperor passed this way, he stabbed Voltaire to the heart by not paying him a visit; but he waited on Haller, was two hours with him, and heard from him such pious talk as he never heard from half the philosophers of the age. The baron was then ill of the disorder which afterward carried him off.

Upon his death-bed, he went through sore conflicts about his interest in Christ, and sent to the old minister, requesting his most fervent prayers, and wishing him to find the way through the dark valley smoother than he found it himself. However, in his last moments, he expressed a renewed confidence in God's mercy, through Christ, and died in peace. The old clergyman added, that he thought the baron went through this conflict to humble him thoroughly, and perhaps to chastise him for having sometimes given way to a degree of self-complacence, at the thought of his amazing parts, and of the respect they procured him from the learned world. He was obliged to become last in his own eyes, that he might become first and truly great in the sight of the Lord.

I am, my lord, &c.,

J. F.

CXLIII.—TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LADY MARY FITZGERALD.

MADELEY, *Sept. 3, 1781.*

MY MUCH HONOURED LADY,—Two days ago I came here, after an absence of above a month; and yesterday I received the honour of your letter without date, which has been, I am told, waiting here some time. What a pity I did not rejoice sooner in the good news you send me, that you desire to be entirely devoted to God! Indeed, complaints follow; but heaven is in that holy desire. If you cultivate it, it will produce all that conformity to a holy God, which love can bring to a human soul, called to partake the divine nature. As for your complaints, they are the natural expressions of that repentance which precedes, in our hearts, the coming of the Comforter, who is to abide with us forever. I am ready to rejoice or to mourn with my honoured friend; and I have abundant cause to do both, with respect to myself, my ministrations, the Church, and my people.

And will you, indeed, find it in your heart to honour my house with your presence, and perfume also with your prayers the plain apartments occupied by your friend Johnson? I wonder at nothing on earth when I consider the condescension with which Emmanuel came down from heaven, and filled a stable with his glory. Your time, my condescending friend, will suit me best. You will be queen in my hermitage: the Lord will rule in our hearts, and you will command under him within our walls. You smile, perhaps, at the vastness of your new empire; but if you can be content and happy in God in my homely solitude, you will make greater advances toward bliss, than if you obtained the principality of Wales. But if you cannot be happy with Jesus, prayer, praise, godly conversation, and retirement, expect a disappointment.

However, my honoured friend, if you come, come as the serious Catholics go on a pilgrimage, as French noblemen go to the Carthusian convent at La Trappe, as the French king's aunts went to the Carmelites; come and do evangelical penance. Our good friend Johnson will tell you of an upper room, where we crucify our old man, and have had many a visit from the new. If you do not bring her with you, bring her faith, which brought him down, and then you shall not pine for the company of earthly princes.

The Prince of peace and life himself will keep his court in our cottage, and your heart shall be one of his favourite thrones.

I hope, my lady, you will bring us good news of our friends in St. James's Place. My heart visits them often, and if bodies could move as quick as thought, they would be importuned frequently with my company. If you write to them before I do, convey my Christian and grateful love in your letter, and accept it yourself, from, my honoured and dear lady,

Your dutiful servant in Christ,

J. F.

CXLIV.—TO MISS PERRONET.

MADELEY, *Sept. 4, 1781.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—You want “some thoughts on the love of God,” and I want the warmest feelings of it. Let us believe his creating, feel his preserving, admire his redeeming, and triumph in his sanctifying love. Loving is the best way to grow in love. Look we, then, at the love of our heavenly Father, shining in the face of our elder Brother, and we shall be changed into love, his image and nature, from one glorious and glorifying degree of love to another. Love always delights in the object loved. “Delight thou in the Lord,” then, “and thou shalt have thy heart's desire;” for we can desire nothing more than

the supreme good, and infinite bliss: both are in God. When, therefore, we love God truly, we delight in what he is, we share in his infinite happiness; and by divine sympathy, his throne of glory becomes ours; for true love rejoices in all the joy of the object it cleaves to. Add to this, that, when we love God, we have always our hearts' desire; for we love his will, his desires become ours, and ours are always perfectly resigned to his. Now as God does whatever he pleases, both in heaven and earth, his lovers have always their hearts' desire, forasmuch as they always have his will, which is theirs. Submitting our private will to his, is only preferring a greater good to a less, as our Lord did in the garden, and we are all called to do it in afflictions. Farewell, my dear friend, and excuse these reflections, which you could make much better than

Your humble servant,

J. F.

CXLV.—TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LADY MARY
FITZGERALD.

MADELEY, *Sept.* 29, 1781.

MY DEAR AND HONOURED FRIEND,—You have been in the fire of affliction, where faith is tried, where patient hope is exercised, and where perfect love, which casts out fear, and endureth all things, is proved worthy of him who made bare his breast, and said to his Father, “Lo, I come to do thy will, O God!” I come to be obedient unto death, even the painful, shameful death of the cross.

Continue to offer your body as a living, or, if it please God, as a lingering, dying sacrifice to him, who has decreed, that if we will reign with Christ, we must suffer with him. This is our reasonable service; for it would be absurd, that our Lord should have been perfected by sufferings, thorns, and the cross, and that we should have nothing but enjoyment, roses, and a crown. How faithful,

how merciful is our God He brings you once more from the verge of eternity ; well, my dear friend, I welcome you back into life, and into the enjoyment of further opportunities of receiving and doing good,—of growing in grace, and perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord.

Chastened, spared like you, and more and more convinced that I am helplessness itself, and that there is help laid on our Surety and Saviour for us, I invite you to say with me,—“When I am weak, Christ my life is strong still ; for me to live shall be Christ, and to die gain.” Dear madam, to know the bare cross is uncomfortable ; but to know and gather the fruit of that tree, is life from the dead, it is more abundant life after fainting. Let us then know, that is, consider, and embrace Jesus Christ crucified to make an end of sin ; shedding tears, and his most precious blood, to cleanse us from all sin ; to trace again the divine image, goodness, love, and happiness on our souls, and to seal our firm title to glory. “Not a text,” say you, “came to me, only I knew none perished at his feet.” Then you remembered Christ, the sum and substance of all the Scriptures ; then you believed on him in whom all the sweetest texts and all the promises are yea and amen. O believe more steadily, more confidently. Dare even to obey the apostolic precept, “Reckon yourselves dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God by Jesus Christ our Lord.” Embrace with more earnestness the righteousness of faith, and you will have more peace and joy in the Holy Ghost. Rejoice in Christ, your peace ; yea, rejoice in God, your Saviour ; and if there is a needs be for your being in heaviness for a season, rejoice in tribulation : “sorrowful, but always rejoicing.” “When I am destitute of all comfort, this shall yield me comfort,” saith Kempis, “that thy will is done.” If Abraham believed in hope against hope,—that is, against human, natural hope,—can you not, through grace, as a daughter of Abraham, rejoice in hea-

venly hope against all natural feelings, and even against all temptations? "Count it all joy," says St. James, "when you fall into divers temptations and trials." Do not be afraid of the storm: Christ is in the ship, and he does not sleep, as unbelief is apt to fancy.

I thank you, my dear lady, for your friendly wish of leaving your clay here. I return it, by wishing you may leave all the body of sin now in that mysterious grotto of mount Calvary, where myriads of sinners have buried their doubts, their fears, and their old man. Prop up your clay a little longer; for I want to sing with you, "Salvation to God and the Lamb." I want you to help me, with the understanding and the voice, to witness, that Jesus saves to the uttermost all who come to God through him; that he can not only make an end of sin, but bring in an everlasting, triumphant righteousness.

I am not without hope of seeing you in London before you see your future hermitage. All my brotherly love goes to town, and salutes you and your good nurses, Mrs. C——, Mrs. ——, Mrs. ——, Mrs. L——, to whose continued care, as well as to that of our Redeemer, I earnestly recommend you.

I am, my dear lady, your obedient, affectionate servant,
J. F.

CXLVI.—TO THE HONOURABLE MRS. C——.

CROSS-HALL, YORKSHIRE, *Dec. 26, 1781.*

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—Your favour of the fourth instant did not reach me until a considerable time after date, through my being still absent from Madeley, a clergyman of this neighbourhood having made an exchange with me, to facilitate my settling some affairs of a temporal nature in this county. The kind part you take in my happiness demands my warmest thanks; and I beg you will accept them, multiplied by those which my dear partner presents

to you. Yes, my dear friend, I am married in my old age, and have a new opportunity of considering a great mystery in the most perfect type of our Lord's mystical union with his Church. I have now a new call to pray for a fulness of Christ's holy, gentle, meek, loving Spirit, that I may love my wife as he loved his spouse, the Church. But the emblem is greatly deficient: the Lamb is worthy of his spouse, and more than worthy; whereas I must acknowledge myself unworthy of the yoke-fellow whom Heaven has reserved for me. She is a person after my own heart; and I make no doubt we shall increase the number of the happy marriages in the Church Militant. Indeed, they are not so many, but it may be worth a Christian's while to add one more to the number. God declared that it was not good that man, a social being, should live alone, and therefore he gave him a help meet for him; for the same reason our Lord sent forth his disciples two and two. Had I searched the three kingdoms, I could not have found one brother willing to share gratis my weal, wo, and labours, and complaisant enough to unite his fortune to mine; but God has found me a partner, a sister, a wife, to use St. Paul's language, who is not afraid to face with me the colliers and bargemen of my parish until death part us.

Buried together in our country village, we shall help one another to trim our lamps, and wait, as I trust you do continually, for the coming of the heavenly Bridegroom. Well; for us the heavenly Child is born; to us a double son is given, and with him the double kingdom of grace and glory. O, my dear friends, let us press into, and meet in, both of these kingdoms. Our Surety and Saviour is the way and the door into them; and, blessed be free grace, the way is free as the king's highway, and the door open, like the arms of Jesus crucified.

January 1, 1782.—I live, blessed be God, to devote myself again to his blessed service, in this world, or in the

next, and to wish my dear friends all the blessings of a year of jubilee. Whatever this year brings forth, may it bring us the fullest measures of salvation attainable on earth, and the most complete preparation for heaven. I have a solemn call to gird my loins, and keep my lamp burning. Strangely restored to health and strength, considering my years, by the good nursing of my dear partner, I ventured to preach of late as often as I did formerly; and, after having read prayers and preached twice on Christmas-day, &c., I did last Sunday what I had never done,—I continued doing duty from ten till past four in the afternoon, owing to christenings, churchings, and the sacrament, which I administered to a church full of people; so that I was obliged to go from the communion-table to begin the evening service, and then to visit some sick. This has brought back upon me one of my old dangerous symptoms; so that I had flattered myself in vain to do the whole duty of my own parish. My dear wife is nursing me with the tenderest care; gives me up to God with the greatest resignation; and helps me to rejoice, that life and death, health and sickness, work all for our good, and are all ours, as blessed instruments to forward us in our journey to heaven. We intend to set out for Madeley to-morrow. The prospect of a winter's journey is not sweet; but the prospect of meeting you, and your dear sister, and lady Mary, and Mrs. L——, and Mrs. G——, and all our other companions in tribulation in heaven, is delightful. The Lord prepare and fit us for that glorious meeting! As soon as I reach Madeley, I shall write to lady Mary. Give my best respects to her, to our dear sister, and to the ladies I have just named; and believe me to be, my dear friend and fellow-traveller to Zion,

Your most obliged and affectionate servant, J. F.

P. S. If Lady Huntingdon be in London, I would beg you to present my duty to her, with my best wishes.

CXLVII.—TO THE RT. HON. LADY MARY FITZGERALD.

MADELEY, *Jan.*, 1782.

I THANK you, my lady, for your kind congratulations on my marriage. The Lord has indeed blessed me with a partner after my own heart, dead to the world, and wanting, as well as myself, to be filled with all the life of God. She joins me in dutiful thanks to your ladyship for your obliging remembrance of her in your kind letter; and will help me to welcome you to the little hermitage we spoke of last year in London, if your ladyship's health or taste should call you to retire for awhile from the hurry of the town.

What a difference between the court of the King of kings and that of King George! How peaceable the former! how full of hurry the latter! The Prince himself welcomes us, and manifests himself to us as Prince of peace, as Emmanuel, "God with us." He will even bring his kingdom and keep his court in our hearts. If we open them by the attention and recollection of faith, he will even sup with us, and make us taste the sweetness of that bread which came down from heaven, and the virtue of the blood which cleanses from all sin. That this may be our constant experience, and that of our dear companions in tribulation in St. James's Place, is the sincere and frequent wish of, my lady,

Your most obliged and obedient servant,

J. F.

CXLVIII.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, *Aug.* 28, 1782.

MY HONOURED FRIEND,—Grace, mercy, and humble love be multiplied to you from God our Father, and from our Lord Jesus Christ, through the eternal Spirit, in whose name we were baptized into the body of the Church, the

spouse of the Son of God. The Lord has peculiar favours in store for your ladyship and for me : the proof is, that we are afflicted. Have you been in a weak state of health ? I have had the honour to drink of your cup : the influenza has laid me down, but the Lord has raised me up again ; and when I was partly well, I broke my shin accidentally (should I not say providentially ?) against a bench, and the consequence was my being confined by a bad leg to my bed, whence I write these lines. O may they be lines of consolation to my dear friend ! May the God of all grace, who comforts unworthy me, rejoice your oppressed heart, and make it overflow with his patient love and sanctifying truth.

You still complain of vile self. I wish you joy for your knowing your enemy. Let vile self be reduced to order, and, though he be a bad master, he will become an excellent servant. If you say, "How shall I do this?" I reply, By letting the Lord, the Maker, the Preserver, the Redeemer, the Lover of your soul, ascend upon the throne of your thoughts, will, and affections. Who deserves to engross and fill them better than he does ? Is he not your first Lord, your best Husband, your most faithful Friend, and your greatest Benefactor ? If you say, "I do not see him ;" I reply that you never saw the soul of any of your friends ; nor do you see even the body of him you call your "idol." O ! allow Jehovah, the Supreme Being, to be to you what he deserves to be,—all in all. One lively act of faith, one assent and consent to this delightful truth, that your Father who is in heaven loves you a thousand times more than you love your idol, (for God's love is like himself, infinite and boundless,) will set your heart at liberty, and even make it dance for joy. What if, to this ravishing consideration, you add the transporting truth, that the Son of God, fairer than the sons of men, and brighter than angels, has loved you unto death—to the death of the cross ; and loves you still more than all your friends do,

were their love collected into one heart : could you help thinking, with a degree of joyous gratitude, of such an instance of divine condescension ? No ; your vile self would be ennobled, raised, expanded, and set at liberty by this evangelical thought : and if you did not destroy this divine conception ; if you nourished this little degree of the love of Christ ; Emmanuel, the God of love, would be more fully manifested in you, and salvation would, from this moment, grow in your soul. Jesus would grow in your believing, loving heart ; self would be nobody ; Emmanuel would be all in all ; and lady Mary would share all the happiness, and ere long all the glory, of that favoured virgin whom all the nations shall call “blessed.” You bear her name ; let her Son, by the incorruptible seed of the word, be also formed in you through faith ; and you will be so taken up by this wonder of divine love, so employed in praising your Father’s mercy, and Saviour’s love and tenderness, that you will have but little time to speak either of good or bad self. When self is forgotten as nothing before God, you put self in its proper place ; and you make room for the heavenly Being, whose holy and happy existence you are to shadow out.

If you have left off attending on the princess, attend on the Prince of peace with double diligence. If you have been wanting in that sweet and honourable duty, it is because the enemy has told you lies of your Saviour, and has cast a veil over the love of his heart and the beauty of his face. See the snare and avoid it.

Shall we ever have the honour of seeing you, my lady ? My wife, who joins in respectful love and thanks to your ladyship for your remembrance of her, says she will do her best to render our cold house safe for you, if not convenient. You would have had a repeated invitation from us, if fear, and a concern for your health, heightened by the bad weather, had not checked our desires to have an opportu-

nity of assuring you here how much we are devoted to your service ; but the roads and the weather beginning to amend, we venture to offer you the best apartment in our hermitage. I wish it were large enough to take in dear Mrs. G—— and our dear friends in St. James's Place ; but we have only two small rooms : to which, however, you would be received with two enlarged hearts ;—I mean, those of, my honoured lady, your ladyship's obedient, devoted servants,

J. and M. F.

CXLIX.—TO THE REV. CHARLES WESLEY.

MADELEY, *Dec.* 19, 1782.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,—I thank you for your hint about exemplifying the love of Christ in his Church. I hope we do. I was afraid at first to say much of the matter ; for new-married people do not at first know each other ; but having now lived fourteen months in my new state, I can tell you Providence has reserved a prize for me, and that my wife is far better to me than the Church to Christ ; so that if the parallel fail, it will be on my side.

Be so good as to peruse the enclosed sheets. Mr. De Luc, to whom they are addressed, is reader to the queen, and the author of some volumes of letters to her : he is a true philosopher. I flatter myself he will present my letter to the queen. Do you find anything improper in the addition I have made to my poem ? I wish I were near you for your criticisms : you would direct me, both as a poet and a Frenchman.

I have yet strength enough to do my parish duty without the help of a curate. O that the Lord would help me to do it acceptably and profitably ! The colliers began to rise in this neighbourhood : happily, the cockatrice's egg was crushed before the serpent came out. However, I got many a hearty curse from the colliers for the plain words I spoke on that occasion. I want to see days of power, both within

and without ; but, in the mean time, I would follow closely my light in the narrow path. My wife joins me in respectful love to Mrs. Wesley and yourself ; and, requesting an interest in your prayers for us,

I remain, my dear sir, your affectionate, obliged brother, servant, and son in the gospel,

J. F.

CL.—TO MRS. THORNTON.

MADELEY, *March 3, 1783.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Yesterday I received your melancholy, joyful letter, as I came from the sacrament, where the grace of God had armed me to meet the awful news. And is my merciful host gone to reap the fruit of his mercy to me ? I thought I should have been permitted to go first, and welcome him into everlasting habitations ; but Providence has ordered it otherwise, and I am left behind to say, with you and dear Mrs. Greenwood, “The Lord gave, and has taken away, and blessed be his holy name !”

The glory with which his setting sun was gilded is the greatest comfort by which Heaven could alleviate his loss. Let me die as he did, and let my last end be like his ! I was so sensibly affected by your account, that I could not help reading part of your letter at church in the afternoon, and desiring all the congregation to join me in thanksgiving for the late mercies He had vouchsafed to my generous benefactor. On such occasions let sighs be lost in praise ; and repining in humble submission and thankful acquiescence. I hope dear Mrs. Greenwood mixes a tear of joy with a tear of sorrow. Who would not be landed on the other side the stream of time, if he were sure of such a passage ? Who would wish his best friend back on the shores of sorrow so triumphantly left by Mr. Greenwood ?

I hope Mr. Thomas Greenwood, and his brother Josiah, have been rooted and grounded in their good purposes by

their dying father's exhortations and charges. Pray, give my kindest love to them both, and tell them I join my entreaties to his, that they would take to and keep in the way that brought their parent peace and joy at the last.

So Mr. and Mrs. Perronet are no more, and Lazarus is still alive! What scenes does this world afford! But the most amazing is certainly that of Emmanuel crucified, and offering us pardons and crowns of glory. May we ever gaze at that wonderful object, until it has formed us into love, peace, and joy! We thank you for the sweet name you still call us by; and we heartily take the hint, and subscribe ourselves your affectionate, grateful friends, and ready servants in Christ,

J. and M. F.

CLI.—TO THE RIGHT HON. LADY MARY FITZGERALD.

DUBLIN, *Aug.* 23, 1783.

HONOURED AND DEAR MADAM,—I see the truth of those words of our Lord, "In me ye shall have peace," comfort, strength, and joy. Be of good cheer. We came here to see the members of our Lord, and we find you removed, and removing farther still than you now are. What does this Providence teach us? I learn, that I must rejoice in the Lord above all his members, and find them all in Him who fills all in all; who is the life of all our friends, the joy of all our brethren. If our Lord is your life, your strength, and your all, you will remove in vain to the north or south; you cannot go from your spiritual friends; they will meet you in the common centre of all life and righteousness; there they will bless you, rejoice in your joy, and sympathize in your sorrow.

If Providence call you to England by Scotland, by which route your ladyship apprehends so much difficulty, you know we must, at least, go to heaven by a way equally painful,—the narrow way, the way marked with blood, and

with the tears and cross of the Son of God ; and if we follow him weeping, we shall return with everlasting joy on our heads. Even now the foretaste of those joys is given to us through hope ; for by hope we are saved. Let our faith and hope be in God ; rooted and grounded in him who gives vital heat to our hearts, and who fans there the spark of grace which his mercy has kindled ; and may that spark, by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, become a fire of holy love, heavenly zeal, and heavenly glory ! Such power belongeth to the Almighty. He that spared not his own Son, and has promised us his Holy Spirit, which is the mighty stream of his grace, and the mighty flame of his love, will not deny us that power, if we wait for it in his appointed ways, and ask it in the all-prevailing name of “ Emmanuel, God with us.”

My dear partner, who, like myself, is deeply sensible of your ladyship’s kindness in remembering us, joins me in thanks for your obliging note, and in cordial wishes that all the desires of your believing soul may be granted you, both for time, death, and eternity. We subscribe ourselves, with grateful sincerity, honoured madam,

Your devoted servants in our bleeding Lord,

J. and M. F.

CLII.—TO WILLIAM SMYTH, ESQ.

MADELEY, *Nov.*, 1783.

DEAR SIR,—The many and great favours you have loaded us with, during our long stay under your hospitable roof, prompted us to make the earliest acknowledgment of our obligations, and to beg you would receive our warmest thanks for such unexpected and undeserved tokens of your brotherly love. But the desire of filling our only frank has hindered their being more early traced upon paper ; though they have been, are now, and, we trust, shall ever be, deeply engraven on our hearts. You have united for

us the Irish hospitality, the English cordiality, and the French politeness. And now, sir, what shall we say? You are our generous benefactor, and we are your affectionate though unprofitable servants. In one sense, we are on a level with those to whom you show charity in the streets: we can do nothing but pray for you, your dear partner, and yours. You kindly received us for Christ's sake: may God receive you freely for his sake also! You have borne with our infirmities: the Lord bear with yours also! You have let your servant serve us; the Lord give all his servants and his angels charge concerning you, that you hurt not your foot against a stone, and may be helped out of every difficulty. You have given us a most pleasing resting-place, and comfortable apartment under your roof, and next your own chamber: the Lord grant you eternal rest with him in his heavenly mansions! May he himself be your habitation and resting-place forever, and place you and yours with his own jewels, in the choicest repository of precious things! You have fed us with the richest food: may the Giver of every perfect gift fit you for a place at his table, and may you rank there with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. You have given us wines: may you drink with Christ himself the fruit of the vine, new in your Father's kingdom! You have given us a rich provision for the way: when you cross the flood, the deep flood of death, may you find that your heavenly Lord has made such a rich provision of faith, righteousness, hope, and joy for you, that you may rejoice, triumph, and sing, while you leave your earthly friends to go home;—which, by the by, is more than we were enabled to do; for, instead of singing in our cabins, there was very different melody.

However, we could soon, with grateful, joyful hearts, look back from the British to the Irish shore, and greet in spirit the dear friends we had left there. The Lord bless and increase them in spiritual, and, if best for them, in

temporal goods also! The Lord crown them and theirs with loving-kindness, and mercies equal to the love of our God and the merits of our Saviour! And now, dear sir, what shall I add? I cannot now even see my Bible but through the medium of your love, and the token with which it alternately loads my pocket and my hand. I cannot even seal a letter with a good wafer, but I find a new call to repeat my thanks to you. I would begin again, but my scrap of paper is full, as well as my heart; and I must spare a line to tell you, that I had the pleasure of seeing our kind benefactress, Mrs. Smyth, safe at Bristol, with her little charge, and lady Mary. We beg our thanks to John, Mr. and Mrs. Johnson, and all who were kind to us for Christ's sake and for yours.

We remain, dear sir, your most affectionate and most obliged pensioners and servants,

J. and M. F.

CLIII.—TO THE SOCIETY IN DUBLIN.

MADELEY, *Nov.*, 1783.

To all the dear brethren who, after kindly inviting John and Mary Fletcher, patiently bearing with them and their infirmities, and entertaining them in the most hospitable, Christian manner, have added to all their former favours, that of thanking them for their most pleasant and profitable journey,—

BRETHREN AND DEARLY BELOVED IN THE LORD,—We had felt shame enough under the sense of your kindness and patience toward us, and of our unprofitableness toward you, when at Dublin. You needed not have added to our shame by the new token of your love,—the friendly letter we have received from you. We are indebted to you, dear brethren, we owed you the letter of thanks you have gratuitously sent. But in all things you will have the pre-

eminence ; and we are glad to drink the cup of humility at your feet. May the Lord, who can part a sea by the touch of a rod, and could at first cause the earth to bring forth abundantly all manner of trees and plants without seed, so bless the seed of the word which we sowed in great weakness among you, as to make it produce a full crop of humble repentance, cheerful faith, triumphant hope, and the sanctifying influences of God's Spirit in your hearts, in all your families, in all your assemblies, and in your whole society ! If your profuse liberality toward us abounded to the comfort of our poor brethren, we doubly rejoice, on your account and on theirs.

When we see so many of your dear names, we rejoice in hopes that, as they fill and confirm an epistle dictated by overflowing love, so they are enrolled on the list of the dear people whom our great High Priest bears, not on the breastplate, as Aaron, but on his bleeding hands and in his very heart, which is the overflowing and everflowing fountain of divine and brotherly love. We cannot remember your faces ; we remember what will last longer than your features,—your work and labour, your repasts of love, together with your prayers and sighs. May that seed sown be watered by the Redeemer's blood ! We ask it with tears of gratitude and joy, while we, on our bended knees, spread your names, as you have kindly put them, and your wants, so far as we remember them, before the Father of mercies, and the Author of every perfect gift. Let our worthless names still find a place in your memory, when you remember your brethren distant in the flesh, but near in the Spirit : among such vouchsafe to reckon,

Dear brethren, your very affectionate and truly obliged
servants in Christ,

J. and M. F.

CLIV.—TO MRS. DOLIER.

MADELEY, *Nov.*, 1783.

AND were my dear brother and sister Dolier pleased by the receipt of a letter from such an unworthy worm? O that I could convey some word from the mouth of my adorable Lord to your hearts! O that he would permit me, his poor creature, to drop a sentence which might prove an encouragement to my dear friends in their way! You ask, "Shall I hope to attain the clean heart, and walk in purity, while here below?" Why not? "Abraham hoped against hope, and there sprang from him, as good as dead, as the stars of heaven for multitude." Does unbelief say, "Thou art dead; thou hast outstayed thy day, and it is all over?" Then, arise out of the dust; rouse up all your powers; against hope believe in hope, and by faith receive strength to apprehend the fulness of God. Remember Christ is in your faith; hold faith, and you hold Christ. If you know not how to get hold on faith, remember it is in the promise: seek for a promise, and lay hold there. But if you cry out, "I see the links of the chain so far off, that, alas! I cannot take hold on the promise; I do not know which is for me, I cannot reach so far,"—well, do not faint yet; there is another link still lower, that is to say, your wants. Can you be sure there is a wound within? are you certain you are a sinner? Well, then, reach your hand hither: "I came not to call the righteous, but sinners." Are you a helpless sinner?—"To them who have no might, he increaseth strength." Are you an ungrateful, backsliding sinner?—Hear Him say, "Thou hast played the harlot with many lovers; but return unto me, saith the Lord." And if you doubt whether you may believe for a great measure of holiness; whether your soul, already in old age and barren, shall believe for abundant

fruitfulness; answer yourself, my dear friend, from that word: "Whosoever will, let him come, and take of the water of life freely." I have just told Mrs. Smyth of one of your sisters here, once a deeper unbeliever than yourself, but now quite full of God: I refer you to her letter. O my God, in mercy let thy power rest on thy dear servants! Convey, even by this poor scrawl, some power to their hearts, some fresh light into the mighty chain which begins with man's wickedness, hangs on God's mercy in the promises, is continued by faith and victory springing therefrom, and ends with Christ's fulness becoming all in all. We pray the God of love to be with your children, and all who meet with them. Tell sister Hammond to keep hold of the chain: it shall draw her into the holy of holies.

With our kindest and most grateful remembrance of you both, we remain, your sincere but unworthy friends,

J. and M. F.

CLV.—TO MR. HENRY BROOKE.

MADELEY, *April 27, 1784.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,—Mercy, peace, and perfect love attend you, your dear partner, and the dear friends under your roof, with whom I beg you may abide under the cross, till, with John, Mary, and Salome, &c., you all can say, "We are crucified with him; and the life we now live, we live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved us, and gave himself for us."

You are certainly right, when you prefer the inward to the outward; the former is the safer; but both together make up the beauty of holiness. The inward life may be compared to the husband, the outward to the fruitful wife: "what God hath joined together, let no man," nor even angel, "put asunder."

With respect to the glory of the Lord, "it is at hand,"

whatever false wisdom and unbelief may whisper to our hearts: it can be no farther off than the presence of Him who fills all in all. Our wrong notions of things are a main hindrance to our stepping into it; and perhaps our minding more the cherubims of glory, than the plain tables and the manna hid in the ark. "There is a passing," says Bromley, "from the outward to the inward, and from the inward to the inmost; and it is only from the inmost that we can see the Lord's spiritual glory." Pray, my dear brother, when you get so fixed in the inmost, as not to lose sight of Him who dwells in the light and in the thick darkness, let me share your joy. Love will make me partake of your happiness.

With respect to what you say of the kingdom not coming with the outward pomp which is discoverable by the men of the world, it is strictly true; but that there is an inward display of power and glory under pentecostal Christianity is undeniable, both from our Lord's promises to his disciples, and from their experiences, after the kingdom was come to them with power. It is sometimes suggested to me, that, as the apostasy hath chiefly consisted in going after the pomp of the whore of Babylon, so that while the woman who fled into the wilderness remains there as a widow, she must be deprived even of those true ornaments, and of that spiritual glory, which were bestowed upon her on the day of Pentecost, the day of her espousals. I do not, however, close in with the suggestion, as I am not sure that it cannot come from Satan transformed into an angel of light, to rob me of a bright jewel of my Christian hope. To wait in deep resignation, and with a constant attention to what the Lord will please to do or say concerning us and his Church, and to leave to him the times and the seasons, is what I am chiefly called to do; taking care in the mean while of falling into either ditch: I mean, into speculation, which is careless of action; or into the activity which

is devoid of spirituality. I would not have a lamp without oil; and I could not have oil without a lamp, and a vessel to hold it in for myself, and to communicate it to others.

I thank you, my dear friend, for the books you have sent me. I read with great pleasure Ramsay's theological works, which were quite unknown to me. My good wishes attend both your brothers.

Fare you all well in Christ: so prays,

J. F.

CLVI.—TO MRS. GREENWOOD.

MADELEY, *June 20, 1784.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I shall never forget the mercy which the living and the dead have showed me; but the sight of Mr. Greenwood in his son has brought some of my Newington scenes fresh to my remembrance, and I beg leave to convey my tribute of thanks back by his hands. Thanks! Thanks! What, nothing but words? Here is my humbling case. I wish to requite your manifold kindness, but I cannot; and so I must be satisfied to be ever your insolvent debtor. Nature and grace do not love it. Proud nature lies uneasy under great obligations; and thankful grace would be glad to put something in the scale opposite to that which you have filled with so many favours. But what shall I put? I wish I could send you all the Bank of England, and all the gospel of Christ; but the first is not mine, and the second is already yours: so, praying the Lord Jesus to make up my deficiencies with you, as he has done with his Father, I remain, your still unprofitable and still obliged Lazarus,

J. F.

CLVII.—TO JAMES IRELAND, ESQ.

MADELEY, *Sept. 13, 1784.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Surely the Lord keeps us both in slippery places, that we may still sit loose to all below.

Let us do so more and more, and make the best of those days which the Lord grants us to finish the work he has given us to do. O let us fall in with the gracious designs of his providence; trim our lamps, gird our loins, and prepare to escape to the heavenly shore, as Paul did when he saw the leaky ship ready to go to the bottom, and made himself ready to swim to land.

I keep in my sentry-box till Providence removes me. My situation is quite suited to my little strength. I may do as much or as little as I please, according to my weakness; and I have an advantage, which I can have nowhere else in such a degree,—my little field of action is just at my own door, so that if I happen to overdo myself, I have but a step from my pulpit to my bed, and from my bed to my grave. I wish brother Tandy joy about opposition: this must be; and the more of it, the more will the word of God prevail. If I had a body full of vigour, and a purse full of money, I should like well enough to travel about as Mr. Wesley does; but as Providence does not call me to it, I readily submit. The snail does best in its shell: were it to aim at galloping like the race-horse, it would be ridiculous indeed. I thank God, my wife (who joins me in thanks to you for your kind offer) is quite of my mind with respect to the call we have to a sedentary life. We are two poor invalids, who between us make half a labourer.

We shall have tea cheap, and light very dear. I do not admire the exchange. Twenty thousand chambers walled up, and filled with foul air, are converted into so many dungeons for the industrious artisan, who, being compelled by this murderous tax, denies himself the benefit of light and air. Blessed be God, the light of heaven and the air of the spiritual world are still free: may we open doors and windows to let them into our souls, which shall be purified and enlightened by these heavenly guests.

My dear partner sweetly helps me to drink the dregs of

life, and to carry with ease the daily cross. Neither she nor I are long for this world: we see it, we feel it, and, by looking at death and his Conqueror, we fight, beforehand, our last battle, with that last enemy, whom our Lord hath overcome for us. That we may triumph over him with an humble, Christian courage, is the prayer of, my dear friend, yours,

J. F.

CLVIII.—TO MR. JOHN FENNEL.

MADELEY, *Nov.* 28, 1784.

DEAR JOHN,—I rejoice to hear that you think of a better world, and of the better part, which Mary and your late mother, another Mary, chose before you. May all her prayers, but, above all, may the dew of heaven, come down upon your soul in solemn thoughts, heavenly desires, and strong resolutions to be the Lord's, cost what it will. Let the language of your heart and lips be, at any rate, "I will be a follower of Christ; yea, a member of his, a child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." A noble promise this! and of which I have so peculiar a right to put you in mind. But, in order to be this happy and holy soul, you must not forget that your Christian name, your Christian vows, and ten thousand reasons besides, bind you to turn your back upon the world, the flesh, and the devil; and to set yourself steadfastly to look to the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, to your Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier.

My dear John, you have no time to lose. We have calls here to the young without end: they die fast. I lately buried two brothers and sisters in the same grave. Be you also ready. I was some nights ago praying for you on my bed, in my sleepless hours; and I asked for you the faith of righteous Abel, the chastity of Joseph, the early piety of Samuel, the right choice of young Solomon, the self-

denial and abstinence of Daniel, together with the zeal and undaunted courage of his three friends. But, above all, I asked that you might follow John the Baptist, and John the Apostle, as they followed our Lord. Back earnestly, constantly, back my prayer. So shall you be faithful, diligent, and godly; a blessing to all around you; and a comfort to your affectionate old friend and minister,

J. F.

CLIX.—TO MRS. THORNTON.

MADELEY, *Jan. 21, 1785.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—I cannot express how much I was concerned at hearing of Mr. Greenwood's illness: my poor prayers have heartily attended him. I want much to hear of his better state of health. Give mine and my wife's kindest love to him; and should change of air, now the spring is coming on, be likely to be of service to him, we desire both him, and you, and Mrs. Greenwood, to remember that you have at Madeley a country retreat, free from the noise of London, and the hurry of business, where we should be glad to have an opportunity of requiting the kindness showed to me both by the living and the dead.

O that the Lord would make both his cup and yours run over! Between the living and the dead, (being dying worms ourselves,) what manner of people ought we to be in our generation? If we cannot be what we would—burning and shining lights, showing forth the glory, the mercy, and the love of our Lord, as those who flame with indefatigable zeal, and run a race of immense labours—let us at least lie meekly at Christ's feet, as Mary, or patiently hang on the cross, as our common Lord.

I want much to know how you all do in soul and body: as for me, I make just shift to fill up my little sentry-box, by the help of my dear partner. Had we more strength, we should have opportunity enough to exert it. O that we

were but truly faithful in our little place! Your great stage of London is too high for people of little ability and little strength; and therefore we are afraid of venturing upon it, lest the consequence should be bringing new burdens on our generous friends. We should be glad to rise high in usefulness; but God, who needs us not, calls us to sink in deep resignation and humility. His will be done! That God would bless you with all his choicest blessings, for time and eternity, is the sincere prayer of, my dear friends, your obliged servants,

J. and M. F.

CLX.—TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE LADY MARY
FITZGERALD.

MADELEY, *Feb. 11, 1785.*

MERCY, righteousness, peace, and joy, be multiplied to dear lady Mary, and to all who are dear and near unto her, from the Father of mercies, through the Son of his boundless love, and through the Spirit of infinite love, which the Father breathes continually toward the Son, and the Son toward the Father! So prays John Fletcher. And who are we, my lady, that we should not be swallowed up by this holy, loving, living Spirit, which fills heaven and earth? If we could exclude him from our hearts, we might vilely set up self, in opposition to Him who is all in all. But whether we consider it or not, there he is, a true, holy, loving, merciful God. Assent to it, my lady; believe it, rejoice in it. Let him be God, all in all; your God in Christ Jesus; your brother, who is flesh of your flesh, bone of your bone; your surety, who payeth all your debt, in whom the Father was reconciling you and us unto himself, and in whom we are accepted. What an ocean of love to swim in,—to dive into! Do not be afraid to venture, and to plunge with all yours; especially our dear friends in St. James's Place, Mrs. G—— and Mrs. L——, &c.

I am, &c.,

J. F.

CLXI.—TO THE SAME.

MADELEY, *July 20, 1785.*

HON. AND DEAR LADY,—We have received your kind letter, and mournfully acquiesced in the will of our heavenly Father, who, by various infirmities and providences, weans us from ourselves and our friends, that we may be his without reserve. It was, perhaps, a peculiar mercy that Providence blocked up your way to this place this summer. A bad putrid fever carries off several people in these parts. Two of our neighbours died of it last week: and my wife, who had visited them, was taken in so violent a manner that I was obliged to offer her up to God in good earnest, as an oblation worthy a son of Abraham. I hope the worst is over; but her weakness will long preach to me, as well as my own. Dying people, we live in the midst of dying people. O let us live in sight of a dying, rising Saviour; and the prospect of death will become first tolerable, and then joyous! Or, if we weep, as our Lord, at the grave of our friends, or at the side of their deathbeds, we shall triumph in hope that all will be for the glory of God, and the good of our souls.

I am, my dear lady, &c.,

J. F.

CLXII.—TO MR. HENRY BROOKE.

MADELEY, *Feb. 28, 1785.*

MY DEAR BROTHER,—We are all shadows. Your mortal parent hath passed away; and we pass away after him. Blessed be the Author of every good and perfect gift for the shadow of his eternal paternity, displayed to us in our deceased parents. What was good, loving, and lovely in them, is hid with Christ in God, where we may still enjoy it implicitly, and where we shall explicitly enjoy it, when he shall appear. A lesson I learn daily is, to see things

and persons in their invisible root, and in their eternal principle; where they are not subject to change, decay, and death; but where they blossom and shine in the primeval excellence allotted them by their gracious Creator. By this means, I learn to walk by faith, and not by sight; but, like a child, instead of walking straight and firm in this good spiritual way, I am still apt to cling here or there; which makes me cry, "Lord, let me see all things more clearly, that I may never mistake a shadow for the substance, nor put any creature, no, not for a moment, in the place of the Creator; who deserves to be loved, admired, and sought after, with all the powers of our souls!"

Tracing his image in all the footsteps of nature, or looking for the divine signature on every creature, as we should look for the king's image on an old rusty medal, is true philosophy; and to find out that which is of God in ourselves is the true wisdom,—genuine godliness. I hope you will never be afraid nor ashamed of it. I see no danger in these studies and meditations, provided we still keep the end in view,—the all of God, and the shadowy nothingness of all that is visible.

With respect to the great pentecostal display of the Spirit's glory, I still look for it within and without; and to look for it aright is the lesson I am learning. I am now led to be afraid of that in my nature which would be for pomp, show, and visible glory. I am afraid of falling by such an expectation into what I call "a spiritual Judaizing,"—into a looking for Christ's coming in my own pompous conceit, which might make me reject him, if his wisdom, to crucify mine, chose to come in a meaner way; and if, instead of coming in his Father's glory, he chose to come meek, riding, not on the cherubim, but on the foal of an ass. Our Saviour said, with respect to his going to the feast, "My time is not yet come:" whether his time to come and turn the thieves and buyers out of the outward

Church is yet come, I know not. I doubt Jerusalem and the holy place are yet given to be trodden under foot by the Gentiles. But my Jerusalem! why it is not swallowed up of the glory of that which comes down from heaven, is a question which I wait to be solved by the teaching of the great Prophet, who is alone possessed of Urim and Thummim. The mighty power to wrestle with him is all divine; and I often pray,—

“ That mighty faith on me bestow
Which cannot ask in vain,
Which holds, and will not let thee go
Till I my suit obtain;
Till thou into my soul inspire
That perfect love unknown,
And tell my infinite desire,
Whate’er thou wilt be done.”

In short, the Lord crucifies my wisdom and my will every way; but I must be crucified as the thieves. “All my bones must be broken;” for there is still in me that impatience of wisdom which would stir when the tempter says, “Come down from the cross.” It is not for us to know the times and seasons, the manner and mystical means of God’s working; but only to hunger and thirst, and lie passive before the great Potter. In short, I begin to be content to be a vessel of clay or of wood, so I may be emptied of self, and filled with my God, my all. Do not give up your confident hope: it saves still secretly, and hath a present, and, by and by, will have a great recompense of reward.

I am glad, exceeding glad, that your dear partner goes on simply and believingly. Such a companion is a great blessing, if you know how to make use of it. For when two of you shall agree touching one thing in prayer, it shall be done. My wife and I endeavour to fathom the meaning of that deep promise: join your line to ours, and let

us search what, after all, exceeds knowledge;—I mean, the wisdom and the power, the love and faithfulness of God.

My wife and I embrace you both; and pray you would help one another and us by your prayers.

Adieu. “Be God’s,” as the French say; and see God yours in Christ, for you and for all our dear brethren.

We are your obliged friends,

J. and M. F.

CLXIII.—TO MR. MELVILL HORNE.

MADELEY, May 10, 1785.

DEAR BROTHER,—I am sorry you should have been uneasy about the books: I received them safely, after they had lain for some time at Salop. I seldom look into any book but my Bible; not out of contempt, as if I thought they could not teach me what I do not know; but because *vita brevis, ars longa*. I may never look into either of them again.

Go on improving yourself by reading, but above all by meditation and prayer: and allow our Lord to refine you in the fire of temptation. Where you see a want, at home or abroad, within or without, look upon that want as a warning, to avoid the cause of the leanness you perceive, and a call to secure the blessings which are ready to take their flight; for sometimes true riches, like those of this world, make themselves wings and flee away: the heavenly dove may be grieved, and take its flight to humbler and more peaceful roofs. I am glad you do not want hard or violent measures: I hope you never will countenance them, no, not against what you dislike. I believe things will turn out very well at the Conference, and I shall be a witness of it, if the Lord of the harvest gives me a commission to be a spectator of the order and quietness of those who shall be there: if not, I shall help you by

prayer to draw from far the blessing of love upon our friends.

In being moderate, humble, and truly desirous to be a Christian, that is, to be the least, the last, and the servant of all, we avoid running ourselves into difficulties, we escape many temptations, and many mortifying disappointments. For my part, as I expect nothing from men, they cannot disappoint me; and as I expect all good things from God, in the time, way, measure, and manner it pleaseth him to bestow, here I cannot be disappointed, because he does and will do all things well.

I trust you labour for God and souls, not for praise and self. When the latter are our aim, God in mercy blesses us with barrenness, that we may give up Barabbas, and release the humble Jesus, whom we crucify afresh, by setting the thief on the throne, and the Lord of glory at our footstool; for so do those who preach Christ out of contention, or that they may have the praise of men. That God may bless you and your labours, is the prayer of

Your old brother,

J. F.

CLXIV.—TO JAMES IRELAND, ESQ.

MADELEY, *July 19, 1785.*

MY DEAR FRIEND,—Blessed be God, we are still alive, and, in the midst of many infirmities, we enjoy a degree of health, spiritual and bodily. O how good was the Lord, to come as Son of man to live here for us, and to come in his Spirit to live in us forever! This is a mystery of godliness. The Lord make us full witnesses of it.

A week ago, I was tried to the quick by a fever with which my dear wife was afflicted: two persons whom she had visited having been carried off, within a pistol-shot of our house, I dreaded her being the third; but the Lord hath heard prayer, and she is spared. O what is life! On

what a slender thread hang everlasting things! My comfort, however, is, that this thread is as strong as the will of God, and the word of his grace, which cannot be broken. That grace and peace, love and thankful joy, may ever attend you, is the wish of

Your most obliged friends,

J. and M. F.

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